evergreen [3]

POCCORI SWEAT

story
YUYUKO TAKEMIYA

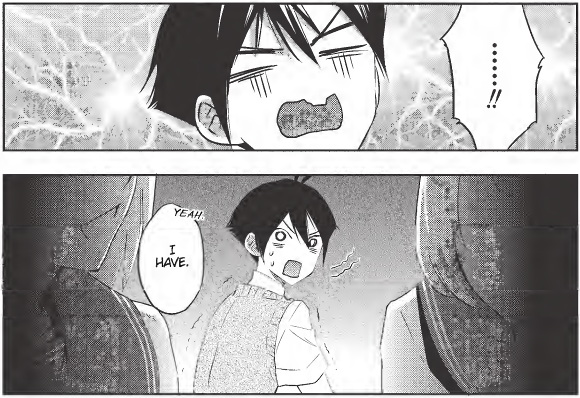
art
AKIRA CASKABE

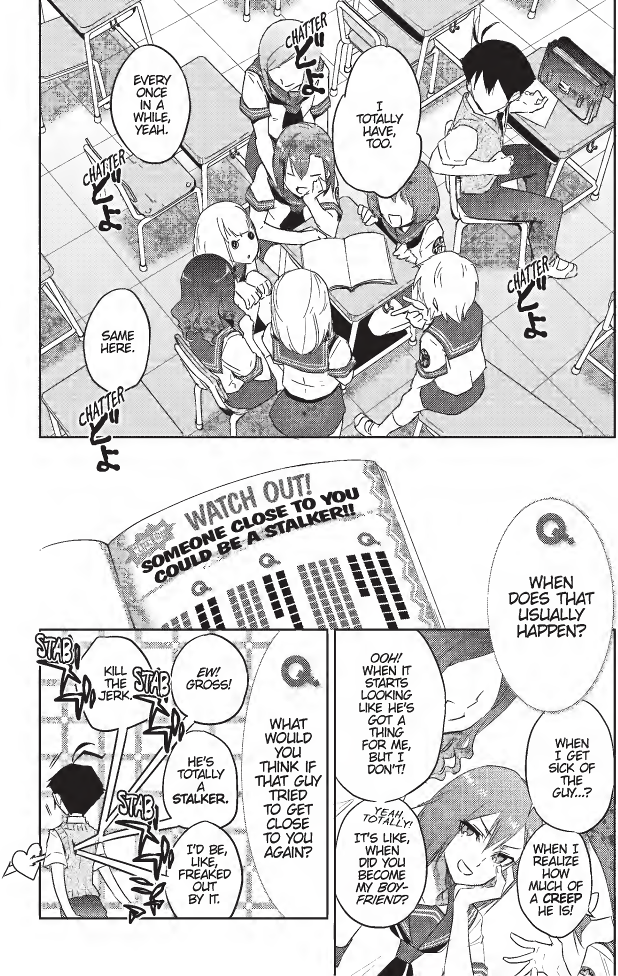
evergreen

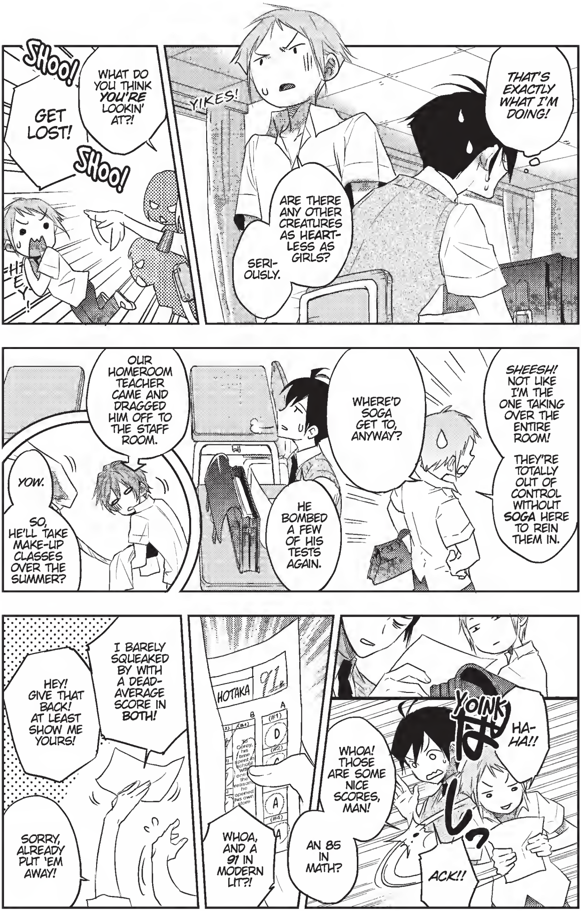
Q.

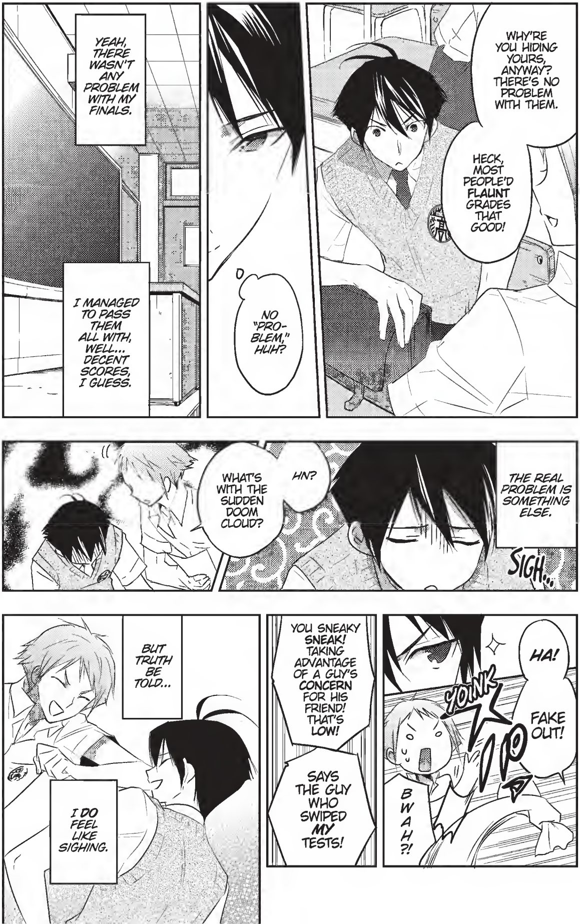
HAVE YOU EVER SUDDENLY WANTED TO PUT DISTANCE BETWEEN YOURSELF AND A GUY FRIEND?

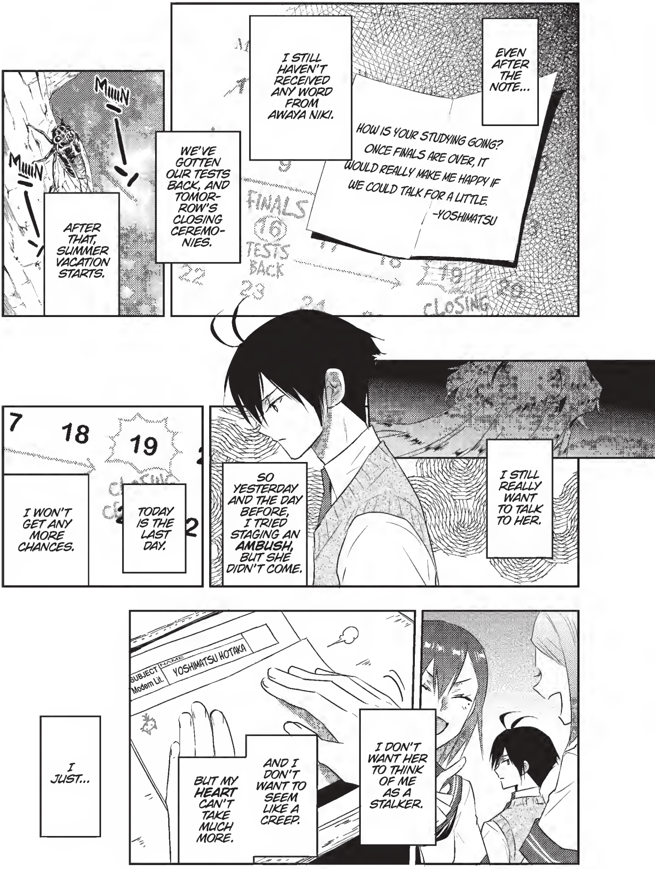
Chapter 11: The Potential to Get Hurt

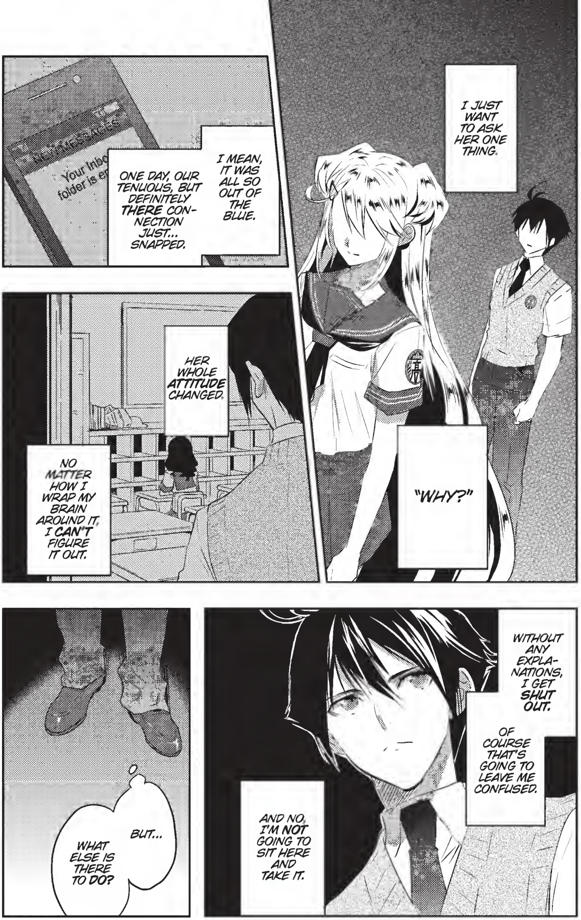


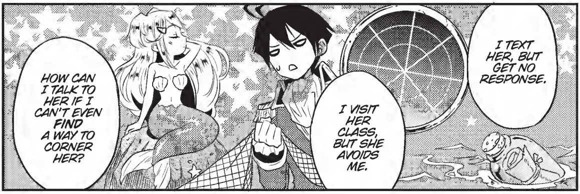

CHATTER どよ
I TOTALLY HAVE, TOO.
CHATTER どよ
EVERY ONCE IN A WHILE, YEAH.
CHATTER どよ
SAME HERE.
CHATTER どよ
WATCH OUT! SOMEONE CLOSE TO YOU COULD BE A STALKER!!
Q. WHEN DOES THAT USUALLY HAPPEN?
WHEN I GET SICK OF THE GUY...?
OOH! WHEN IT STARTS LOOKING LIKE HE'S GOT A THING FOR ME, BUT I DON'T!
WHEN I REALIZE HOW MUCH OF A CREEP HE IS!
YEAH, TOTALLY!
IT'S LIKE, WHEN DID YOU BECOME MY BOYFRIEND?
Q. WHAT WOULD YOU THINK IF THAT GUY TRIED TO GET CLOSE TO YOU AGAIN?
EW! GROSS!
STAB
KILL THE JERK.
STAB
HE'S TOTALLY A STALKER.
STAB
I'D BE, LIKE, FREAKED OUT BY IT.

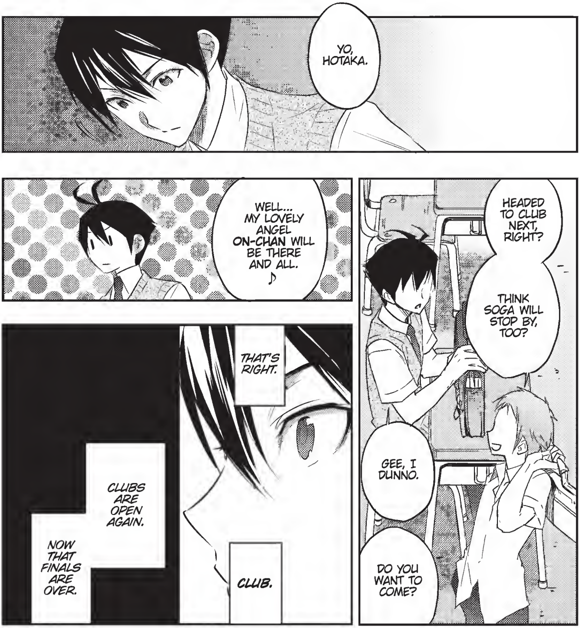

THAT'S EXACTLY WHAT I'M DOING!
YIKES!
ARE THERE ANY OTHER CREATURES AS HEARTLESS AS GIRLS?
SERIOUSLY.
WHAT DO YOU THINK *YOU'RE* LOOKIN' AT?!
SHOO!
GET LOST!
SHOO!
HEY!
SHEESH! NOT LIKE I'M THE ONE TAKING OVER THE ENTIRE ROOM!
THEY'RE TOTALLY OUT OF CONTROL WITHOUT SOGA HERE TO REIN THEM IN.
WHERE'D SOGA GET TO, ANYWAY?
HE BOMBED A FEW OF HIS TESTS AGAIN.
OUR HOMEROOM TEACHER CAME AND DRAGGED HIM OFF TO THE STAFF ROOM.
YOW.
SO, HE'LL TAKE MAKE-UP CLASSES OVER THE SUMMER?
YOINK
ばしっ
HA-HA!!
WHOA! THOSE ARE SOME NICE SCORES, MAN!
AN 85 IN MATH?
ACK!!
HOTAKA
91
WHOA, AND A 91 IN MODERN LIT?!
I BARELY SQUEAKED BY WITH A DEAD-AVERAGE SCORE IN BOTH!
HEY! GIVE THAT BACK! AT LEAST SHOW ME YOURS!
SORRY, ALREADY PUT 'EM AWAY!

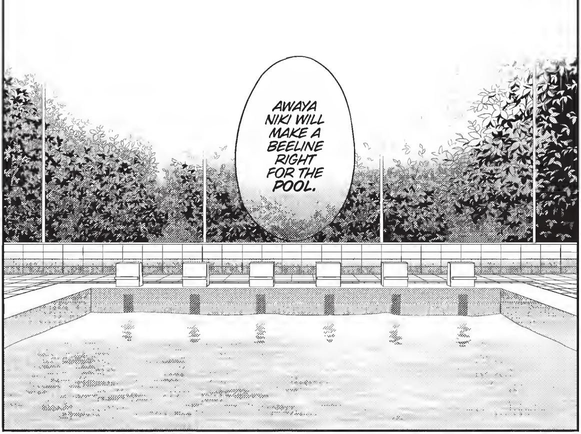

WHY'RE YOU HIDING YOURS, ANYWAY? THERE'S NO PROBLEM WITH THEM.
HECK, MOST PEOPLE'D FLAUNT GRADES THAT GOOD!
NO "PROBLEM," HUH?
YEAH, THERE WASN'T ANY PROBLEM WITH MY FINALS.
I MANAGED TO PASS THEM ALL WITH, WELL... DECENT SCORES, I GUESS.
THE REAL PROBLEM IS SOMETHING ELSE.
SIGH...
HN?
WHAT'S WITH THE SUDDEN DOOM CLOUD?
HA!
FAKE OUT!
YOINK
!!
BWAH?!
YOU SNEAKY SNEAK! TAKING ADVANTAGE OF A GUY'S CONCERN FOR HIS FRIEND! THAT'S LOW!
SAYS THE GUY WHO SWIPED MY TESTS!
BUT TRUTH BE TOLD...
I DO FEEL LIKE SIGHING.

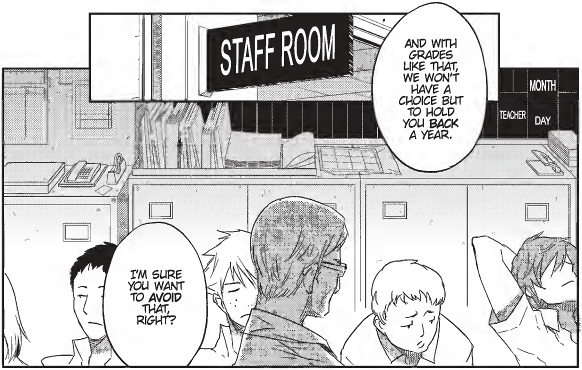

EVEN AFTER THE NOTE...
HOW IS YOUR STUDYING GOING? ONCE FINALS ARE OVER, IT WOULD REALLY MAKE ME HAPPY IF WE COULD TALK FOR A LITTLE.
-YOSHIMATSU
I STILL HAVEN'T RECEIVED ANY WORD FROM AWAYA NIKI.
FINALS
16
TESTS BACK
19
CLOSING
22
23
WE'VE GOTTEN OUR TESTS BACK, AND TOMORROW'S CLOSING CEREMONIES.
MIIIIN
MIIIIN
AFTER THAT, SUMMER VACATION STARTS.
I STILL REALLY WANT TO TALK TO HER.
SO YESTERDAY AND THE DAY BEFORE, I TRIED STAGING AN **AMBUSH,** BUT SHE DIDN'T COME.
7
18
19
TODAY IS THE LAST DAY.
I WON'T GET ANY MORE CHANCES.
I DON'T WANT HER TO THINK OF ME AS A STALKER.
SUBJECT Modern Lit.
NAME YOSHIMATSU HOTAKA
AND I DON'T WANT TO SEEM LIKE A CREEP.
BUT MY **HEART** CAN'T TAKE MUCH MORE.
I JUST...

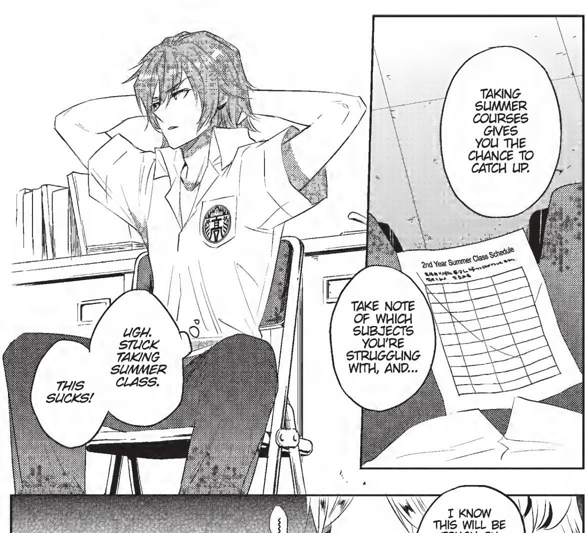

NEW MESSAGES
Your Inbo folder is e
ONE DAY, OUR TENUOUS, BUT DEFINITELY **THERE** CONNECTION JUST... SNAPPED.
I MEAN, IT WAS ALL SO OUT OF THE BLUE.
HER WHOLE **ATTITUDE** CHANGED.
NO MATTER HOW I WRAP MY BRAIN AROUND IT, I **CAN'T** FIGURE IT OUT.
I JUST WANT TO ASK HER ONE THING.
"WHY?"
WITHOUT ANY EXPLANATIONS, I GET **SHUT OUT.**
OF COURSE THAT'S GOING TO LEAVE ME CONFUSED.
AND NO, I'M **NOT** GOING TO SIT HERE AND TAKE IT.
BUT...
WHAT ELSE IS THERE TO **DO?**

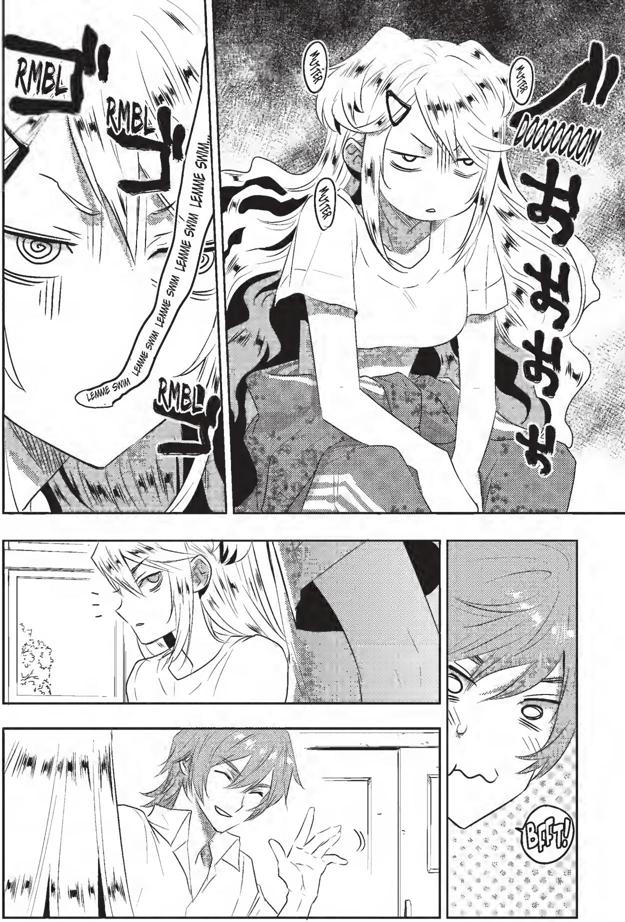

I TEXT HER, BUT GET NO RESPONSE.
I VISIT HER CLASS, BUT SHE AVOIDS ME.
HOW CAN I TALK TO HER IF I CAN'T EVEN FIND A WAY TO CORNER HER?

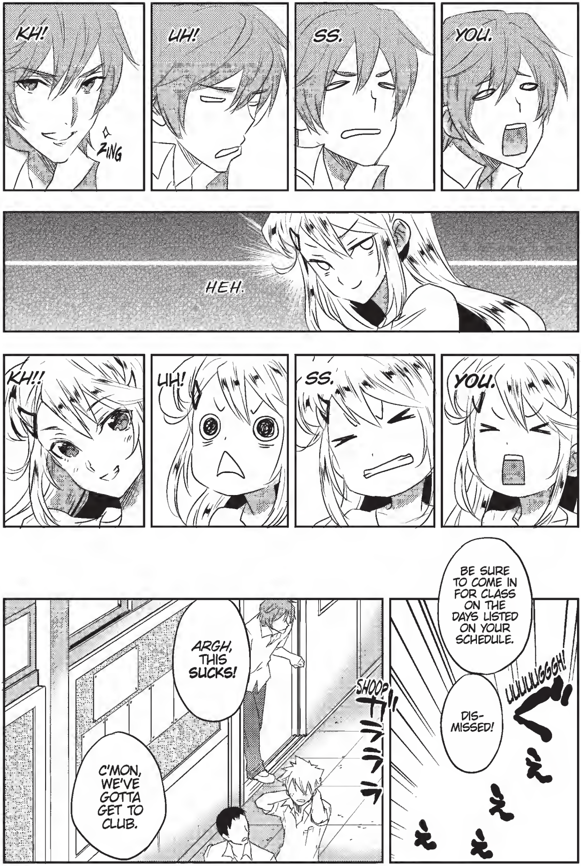

YO, HOTAKA.
HEADED TO CLUB NEXT, RIGHT?
THINK SOGA WILL STOP BY, TOO?
GEE, I DUNNO.
DO YOU WANT TO COME?
WELL... MY LOVELY ANGEL ON-CHAN WILL BE THERE AND ALL. ♪
THAT'S RIGHT.
CLUB.
CLUBS ARE OPEN AGAIN.
NOW THAT FINALS ARE OVER.

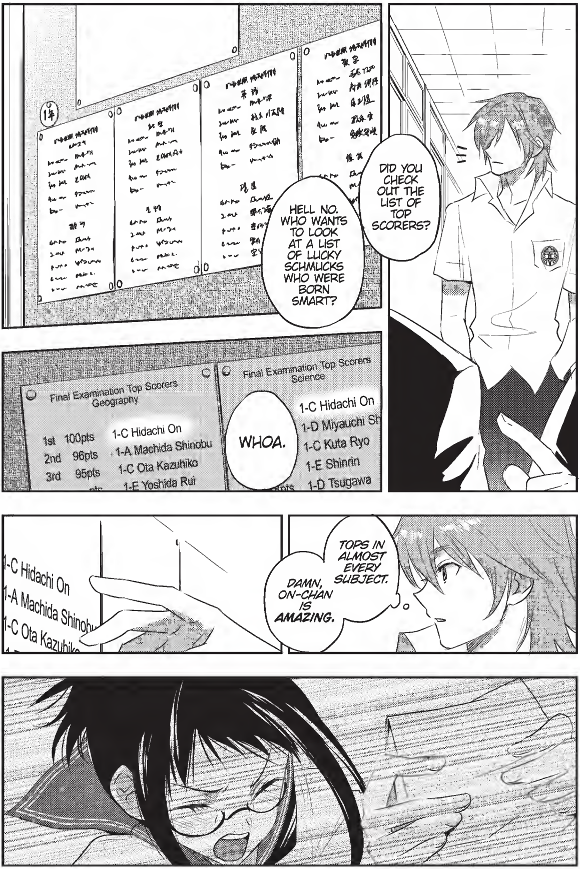

AWAYA NIKI WILL MAKE A BEELINE RIGHT FOR THE POOL.

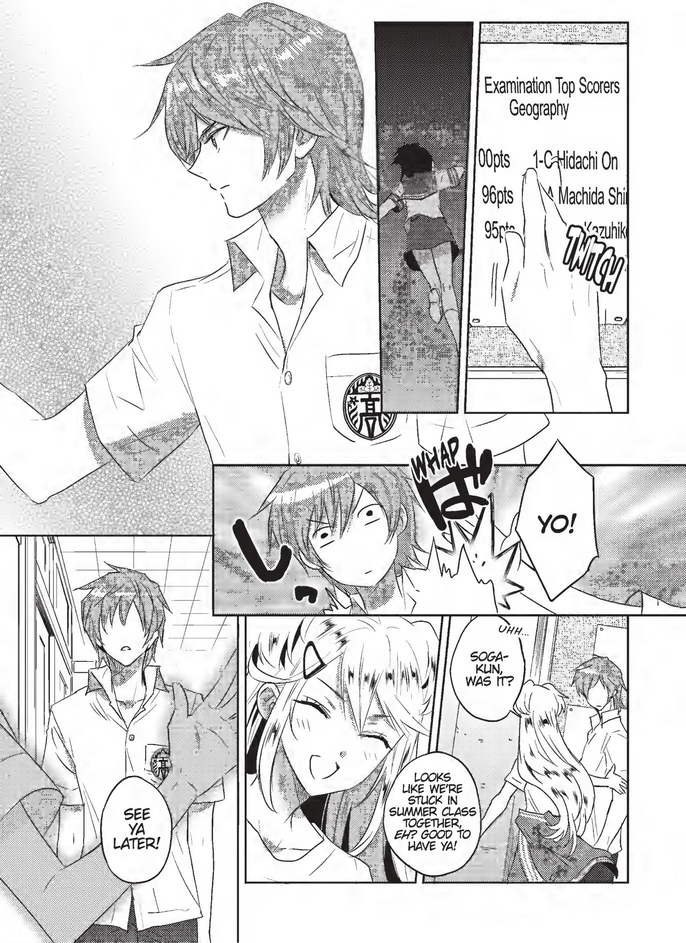

STAFF ROOM
AND WITH GRADES LIKE THAT, WE WON'T HAVE A CHOICE BUT TO HOLD YOU BACK A YEAR.
MONTH
TEACHER
DAY
I'M SURE YOU WANT TO AVOID THAT, RIGHT?

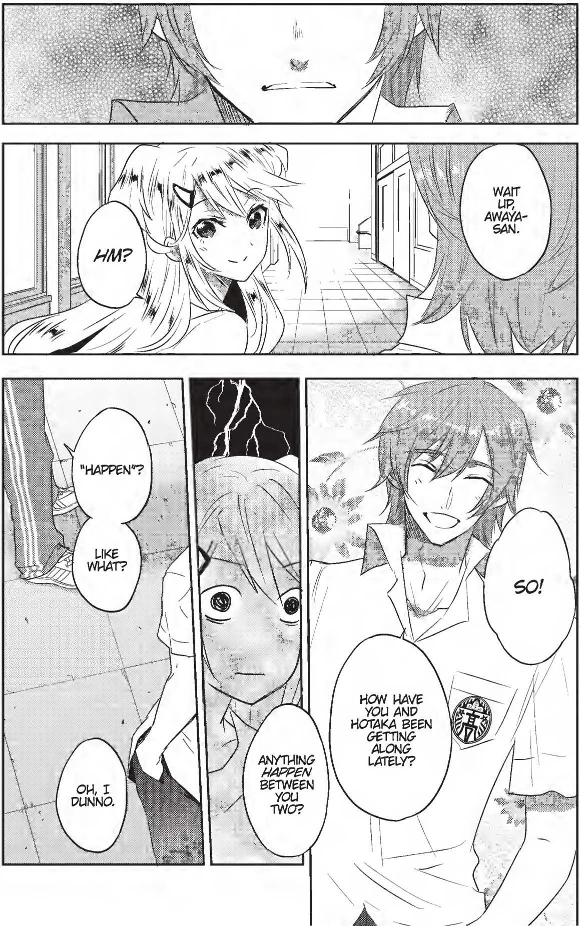

TAKING SUMMER COURSES GIVES YOU THE CHANCE TO CATCH UP.
2nd Year Summer Class Schedule
TAKE NOTE OF WHICH SUBJECTS YOU'RE STRUGGLING WITH, AND...
UGH. STUCK TAKING SUMMER CLASS.
THIS SUCKS!
I KNOW THIS WILL BE TOUGH ON THOSE OF YOU WHO HAVE BUSY SUMMER CLUB SCHEDULES...
BUT BY NEGLECTING YOUR STUDIES, YOU SERIOUSLY RISK...
—

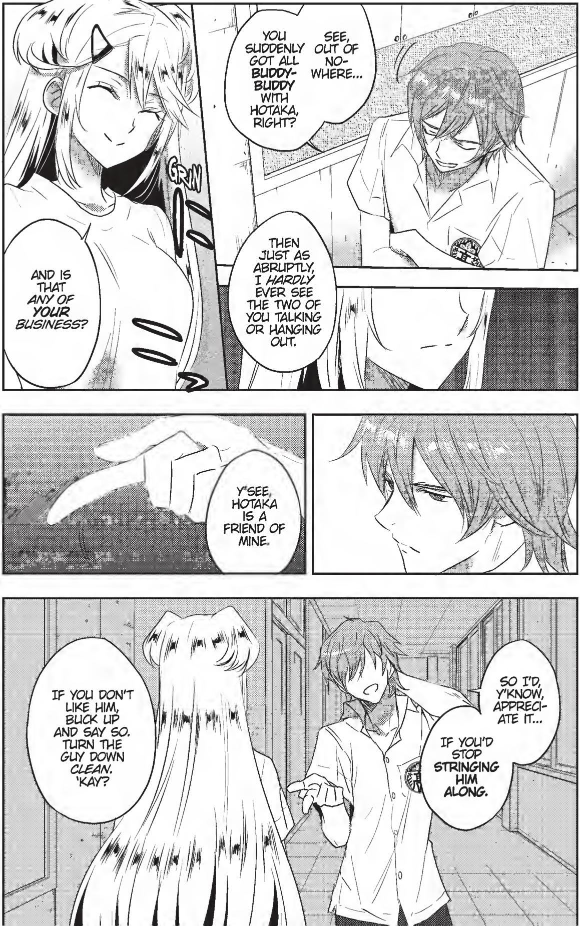

MUTTER
MUTTER
MUTTER
DOOOOOOOM
ズおおお～ぉ
RMBL
ゴ
RMBL
ゴ
LEMME SWIM LEMME SWIM LEMME SWIM LEMME SWIM LEMME SWIM LEMME SWIM...
RMBL
ゴ
BFFT!

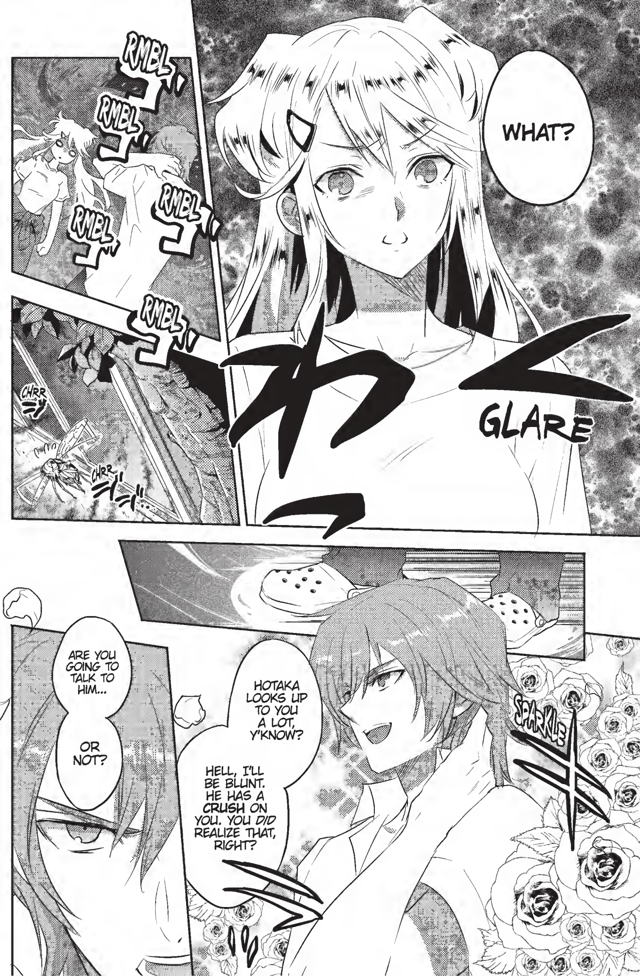

KH!
ZING
UH!
SS.
YOU.
HEH.
KH!!
UH!
SS.
YOU.
BE SURE TO COME IN FOR CLASS ON THE DAYS LISTED ON YOUR SCHEDULE.
UUUUUGGGH!
ぐえええええ
DIS-MISSED!
SHOOP
ガラララ
ARGH, THIS SUCKS!
C'MON, WE'VE GOTTA GET TO CLUB.

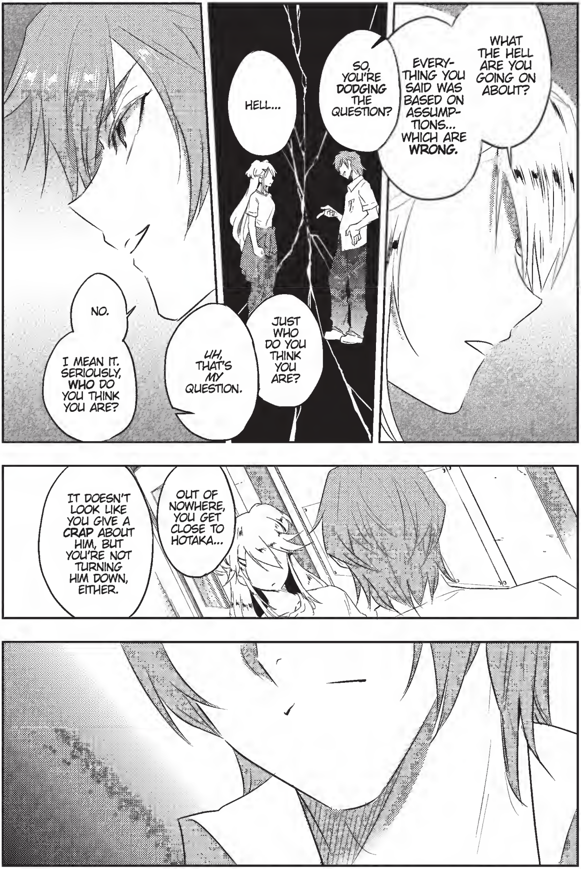

DID YOU CHECK OUT THE LIST OF TOP SCORERS?
HELL NO. WHO WANTS TO LOOK AT A LIST OF LUCKY SCHMUCKS WHO WERE BORN SMART?
1年
Final Examination Top Scorers Science
1-C Hidachi On
1-D Miyauchi Sh
1-C Kuta Ryo
1-E Shinrin
1-D Tsugawa
Final Examination Top Scorers Geography
1st 100pts 1-C Hidachi On
2nd 96pts 1-A Machida Shinobu
3rd 95pts 1-C Ota Kazuhiko
1-E Yoshida Rui
WHOA.
TOPS IN ALMOST EVERY SUBJECT.
DAMN, ON-CHAN IS AMAZING.
1-C Hidachi On
1-A Machida Shinobu
1-C Ota Kazuhiko

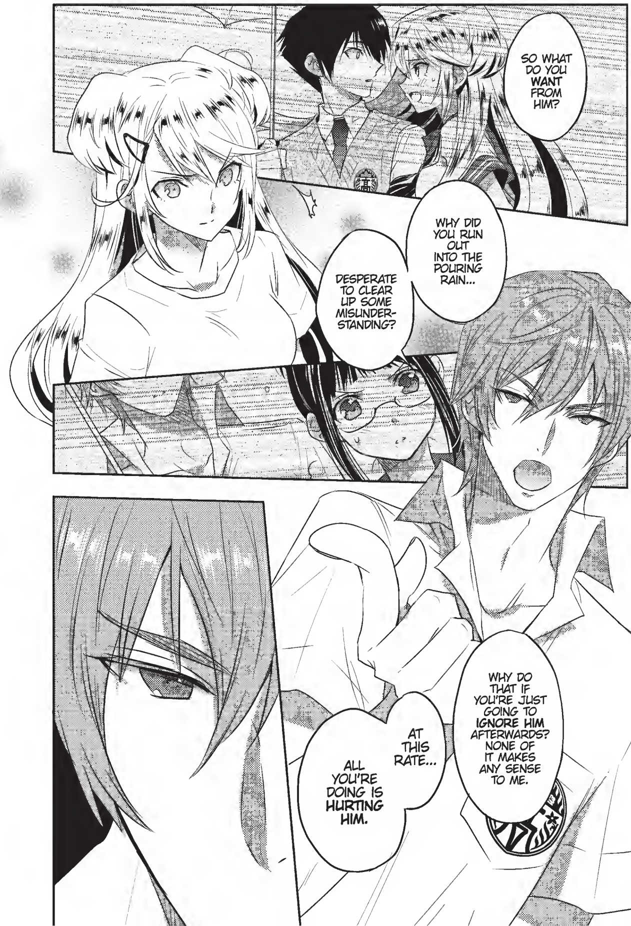

Examination Top Scorers
Geography
00pts 1-C Hidachi On
96pts A Machida Shi
95pts Kazuhik
TWITCH
YO!
WHAP
ば
し
UHH...
SOGA-KUN, WAS IT?
LOOKS LIKE WE'RE STUCK IN SUMMER CLASS TOGETHER, EH? GOOD TO HAVE YA!
SEE YA LATER!

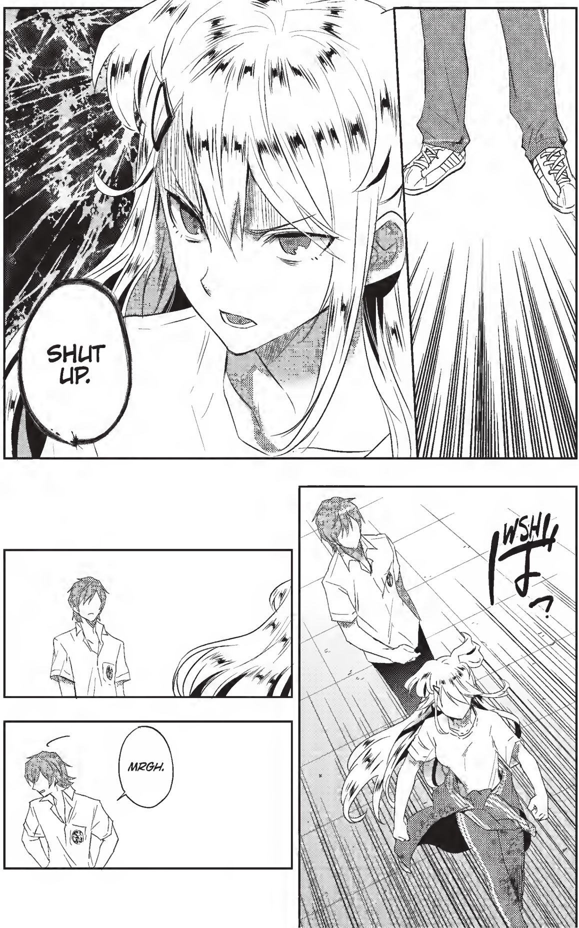

WAIT UP, AWAYA-SAN.
HM?
SO!
HOW HAVE YOU AND HOTAKA BEEN GETTING ALONG LATELY?
ANYTHING *HAPPEN* BETWEEN YOU TWO?
"HAPPEN"?
LIKE WHAT?
OH, I DUNNO.

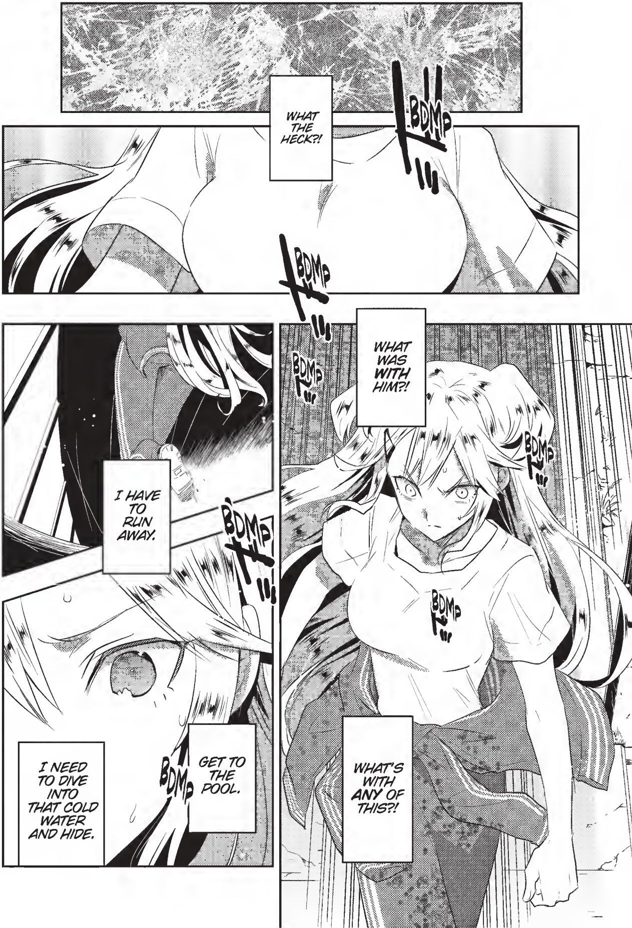

SEE, OUT OF NO-WHERE...
YOU SUDDENLY GOT ALL BUDDY-BUDDY WITH HOTAKA, RIGHT?
THEN JUST AS ABRUPTLY, I HARDLY EVER SEE THE TWO OF YOU TALKING OR HANGING OUT.
GRIN
AND IS THAT ANY OF YOUR BUSINESS?
Y'SEE, HOTAKA IS A FRIEND OF MINE.
SO I'D, Y'KNOW, APPRECI-ATE IT...
IF YOU'D STOP STRINGING HIM ALONG.
IF YOU DON'T LIKE HIM, BUCK UP AND SAY SO. TURN THE GUY DOWN CLEAN. 'KAY?

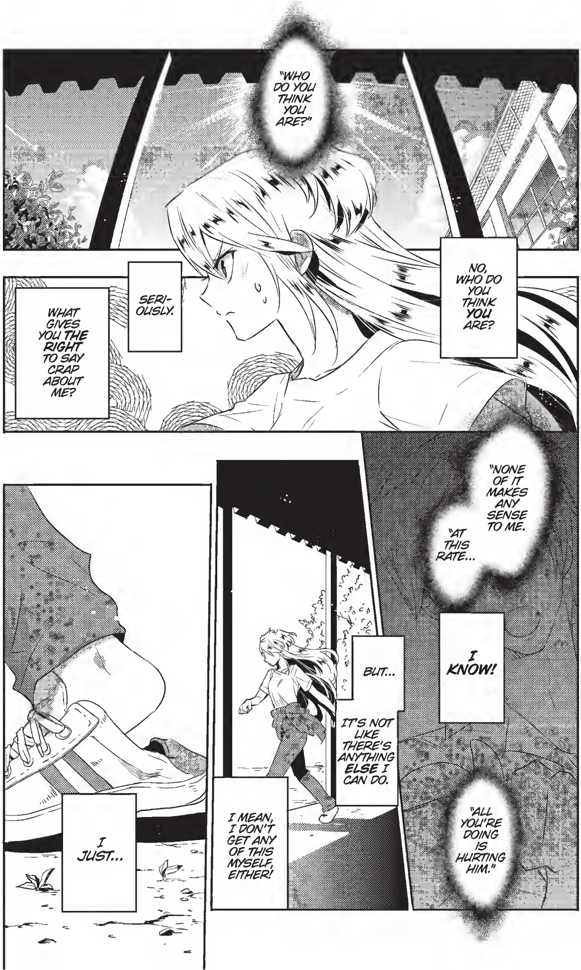

WHAT?
GLARE
RMBL RMBL RMBL RMBL RMBL
CHRR CHRR
HOTAKA LOOKS UP TO YOU A LOT, Y'KNOW?
HELL, I'LL BE BLUNT. HE HAS A **CRUSH ON** YOU. YOU *DID* REALIZE THAT, RIGHT?
SPARKLE
ARE YOU GOING TO TALK TO HIM...
OR NOT?

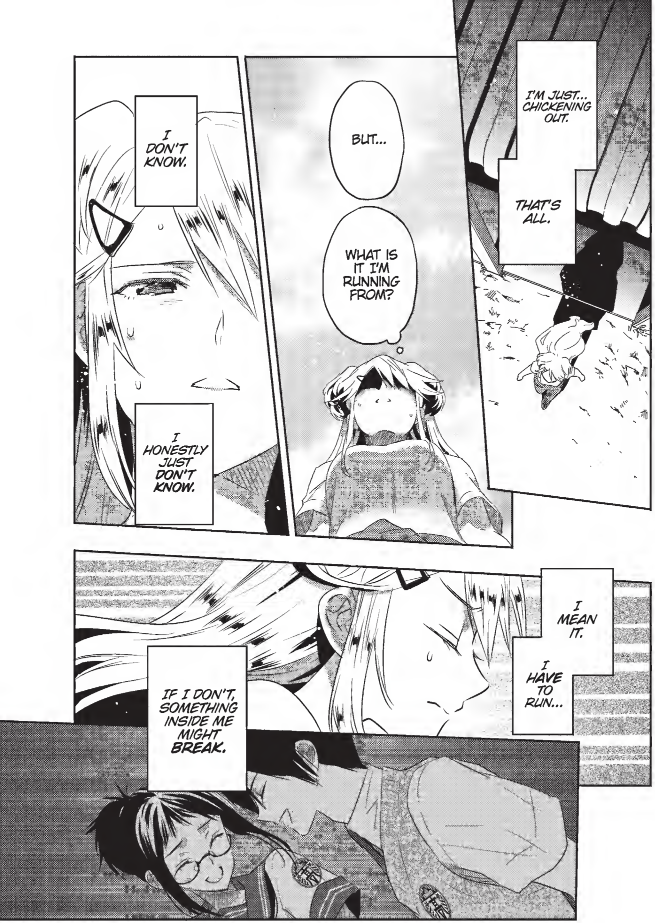

WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU GOING ON ABOUT?
EVERYTHING YOU SAID WAS BASED ON ASSUMPTIONS... WHICH ARE **WRONG.**
SO, YOU'RE DODGING THE QUESTION?
HELL...
JUST WHO DO YOU THINK YOU ARE?
UH, THAT'S *MY* QUESTION.
NO.
I MEAN IT. SERIOUSLY, WHO DO YOU THINK YOU ARE?
OUT OF NOWHERE, YOU GET CLOSE TO HOTAKA...
IT DOESN'T LOOK LIKE YOU GIVE A **CRAP** ABOUT HIM, BUT YOU'RE NOT TURNING HIM DOWN, EITHER.

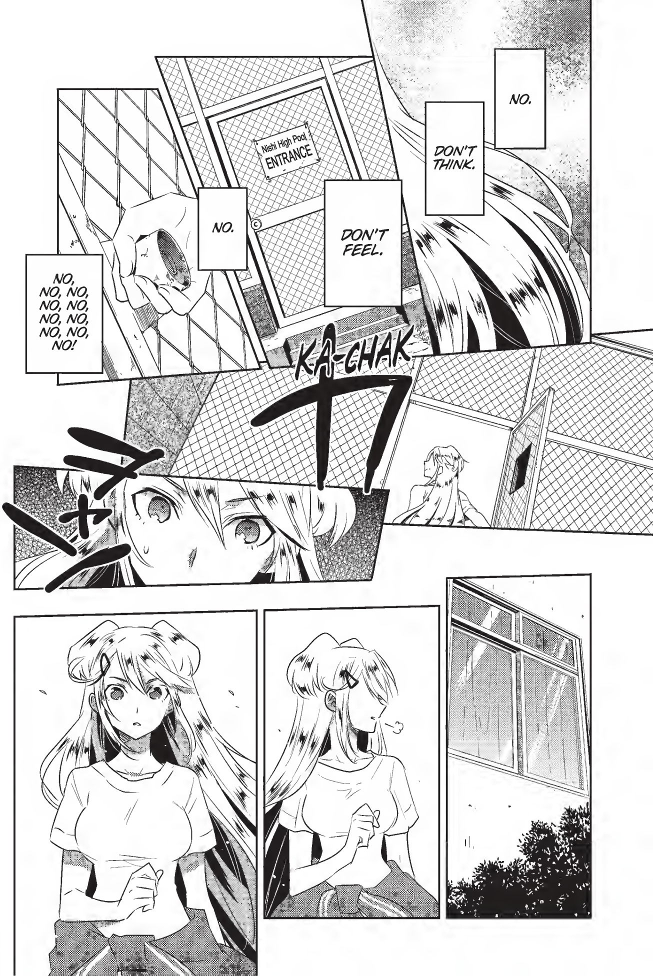

SO WHAT DO YOU WANT FROM HIM?
WHY DID YOU RUN OUT INTO THE POURING RAIN...
DESPERATE TO CLEAR UP SOME MISUNDERSTANDING?
WHY DO THAT IF YOU'RE JUST GOING TO IGNORE HIM AFTERWARDS? NONE OF IT MAKES ANY SENSE TO ME.
AT THIS RATE...
ALL YOU'RE DOING IS HURTING HIM.

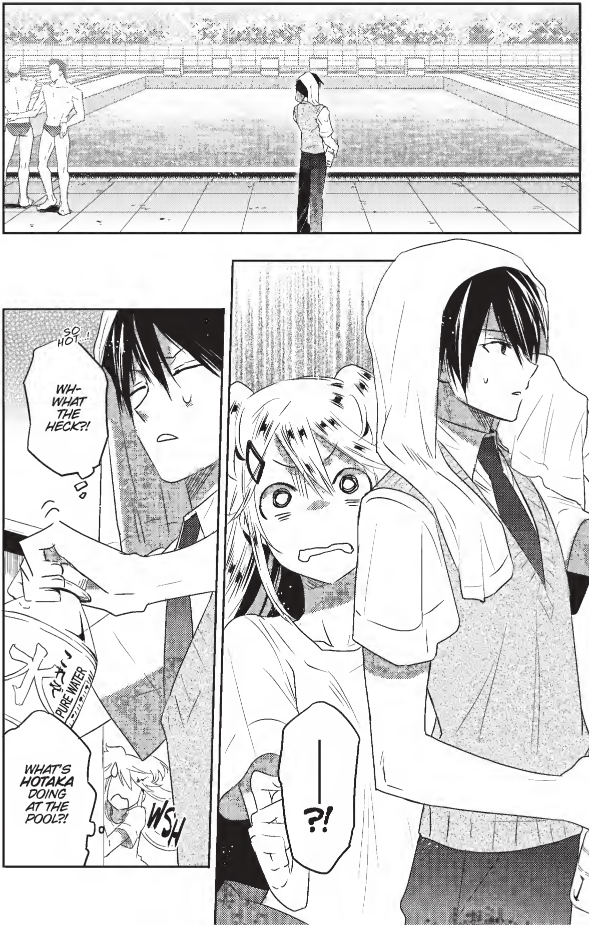

SHUT UP.
WSH
ぱっ
MRGH.

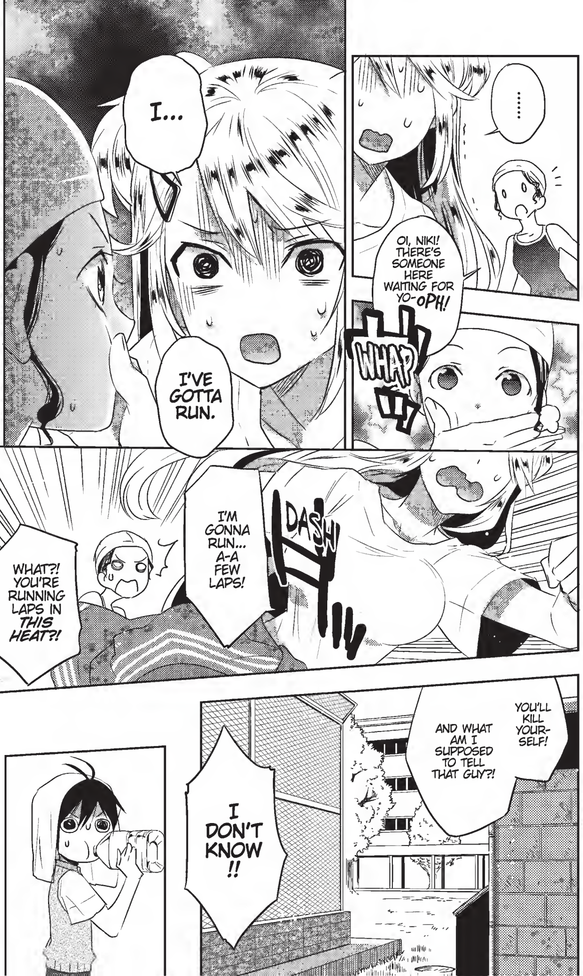

WHAT THE HECK?!
BDMP
BDMP
WHAT WAS WITH HIM?!
BDMP
BDMP
BDMP
WHAT'S WITH ANY OF THIS?!
I HAVE TO RUN AWAY.
BDMP
GET TO THE POOL.
BDMP
I NEED TO DIVE INTO THAT COLD WATER AND HIDE.

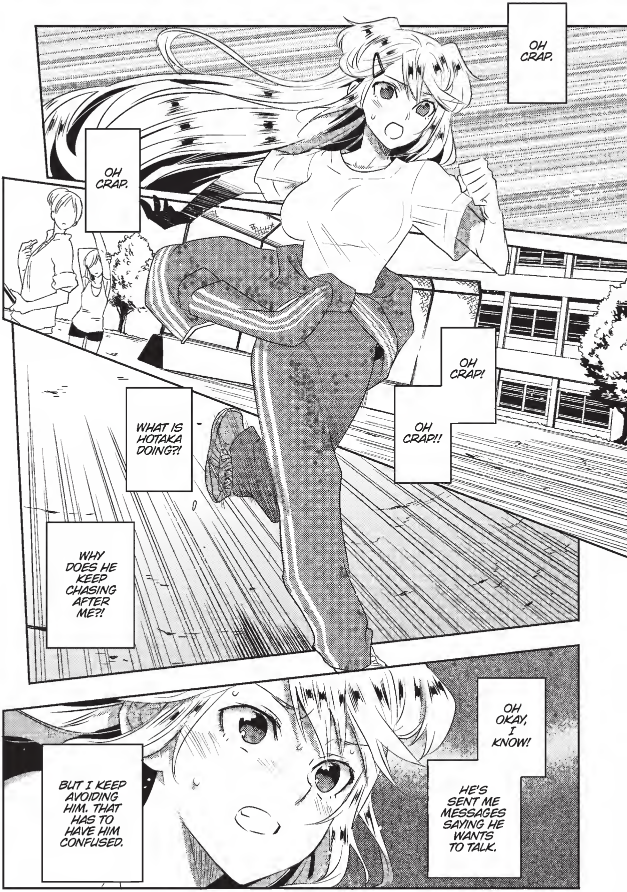

"WHO DO YOU THINK YOU ARE?"
NO, WHO DO YOU THINK YOU ARE?
SERI-OUSLY.
WHAT GIVES YOU THE RIGHT TO SAY CRAP ABOUT ME?
"NONE OF IT MAKES ANY SENSE TO ME.
"AT THIS RATE...
I KNOW!
"ALL YOU'RE DOING IS HURTING HIM."
BUT...
IT'S NOT LIKE THERE'S ANYTHING ELSE I CAN DO.
I MEAN, I DON'T GET ANY OF THIS MYSELF, EITHER!
I JUST...

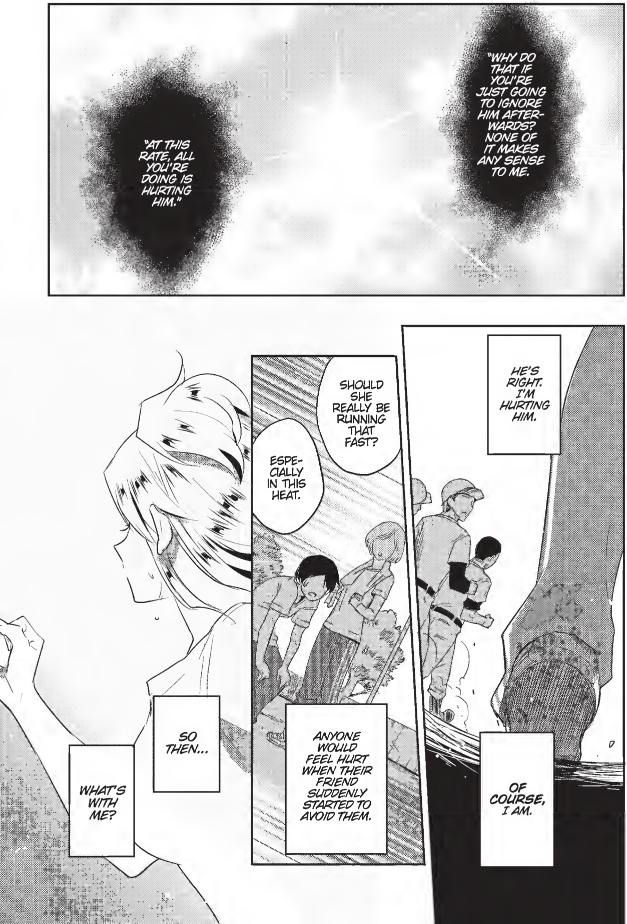

I'M JUST... CHICKENING OUT.
THAT'S ALL.
BUT...
WHAT IS IT I'M RUNNING FROM?
I DON'T KNOW.
I HONESTLY JUST DON'T KNOW.
I MEAN IT.
I HAVE TO RUN...
IF I DON'T, SOMETHING INSIDE ME MIGHT BREAK.

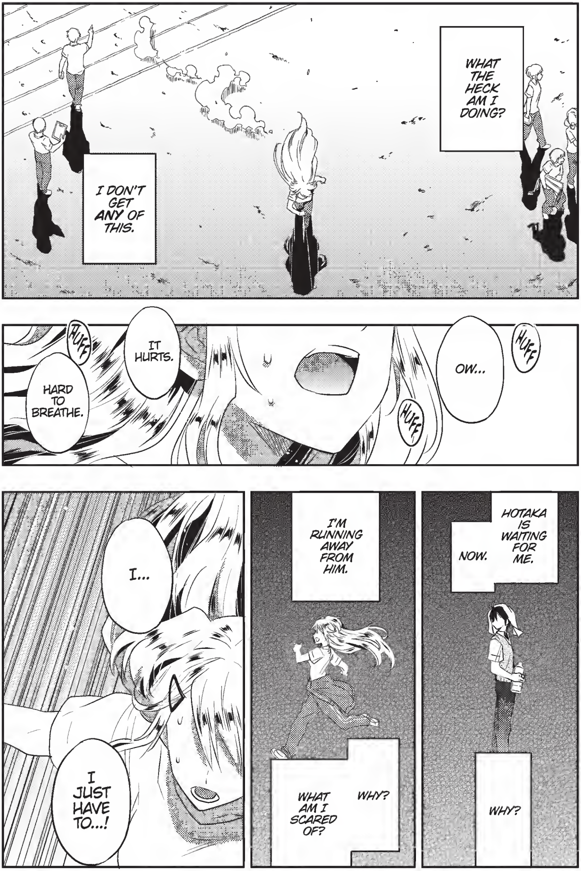

NO.
DON'T THINK.
DON'T FEEL.
NO.
Nishi High Pool
ENTRANCE
NO, NO, NO, NO, NO, NO, NO, NO, NO, NO!
KA-CHAK

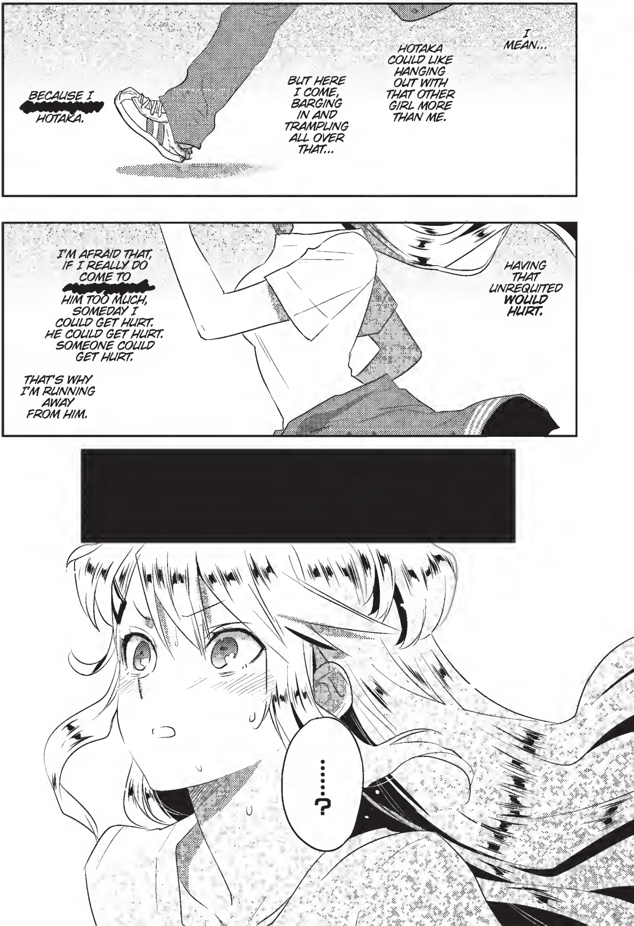

—?!
SO HOT...!
WH-WHAT THE HECK?!
PURE WATER
WHAT'S HOTAKA DOING AT THE POOL?!
WSH

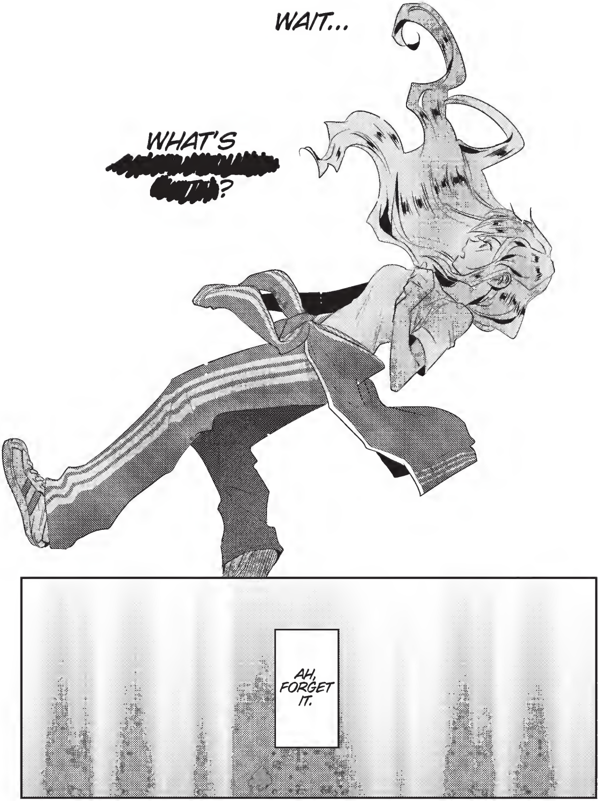

……
OI, NIKI! THERE'S SOMEONE HERE WAITING FOR YO-OPH!
WHAP
I...
I'VE GOTTA RUN.
DASH
I'M GONNA RUN... A-A FEW LAPS!
WHAT?! YOU'RE RUNNING LAPS IN THIS HEAT?!
YOU'LL KILL YOURSELF!
AND WHAT AM I SUPPOSED TO TELL THAT GUY?!
I DON'T KNOW!!

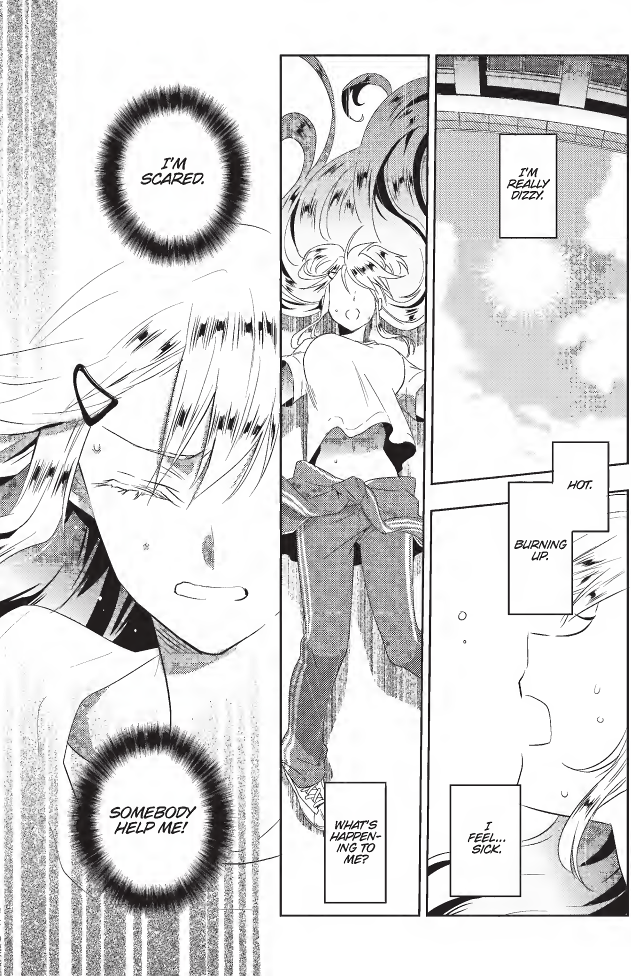

OH CRAP.
OH CRAP.
OH CRAP!
OH CRAP!!
WHAT IS HOTAKA DOING?!
WHY DOES HE KEEP CHASING AFTER ME?!
OH OKAY, I KNOW!
HE'S SENT ME MESSAGES SAYING HE WANTS TO TALK.
BUT I KEEP AVOIDING HIM. THAT HAS TO HAVE HIM CONFUSED.

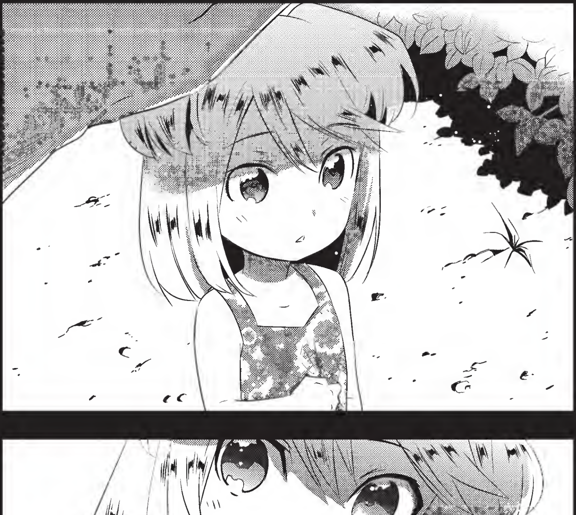

"WHY DO THAT IF YOU'RE JUST GOING TO IGNORE HIM AFTERWARDS? NONE OF IT MAKES ANY SENSE TO ME.
"AT THIS RATE, ALL YOU'RE DOING IS HURTING HIM."
HE'S RIGHT. I'M HURTING HIM.
OF COURSE, I AM.
SHOULD SHE REALLY BE RUNNING THAT FAST?
ESPECIALLY IN THIS HEAT.
ANYONE WOULD FEEL HURT WHEN THEIR FRIEND SUDDENLY STARTED TO AVOID THEM.
SO THEN...
WHAT'S WITH ME?

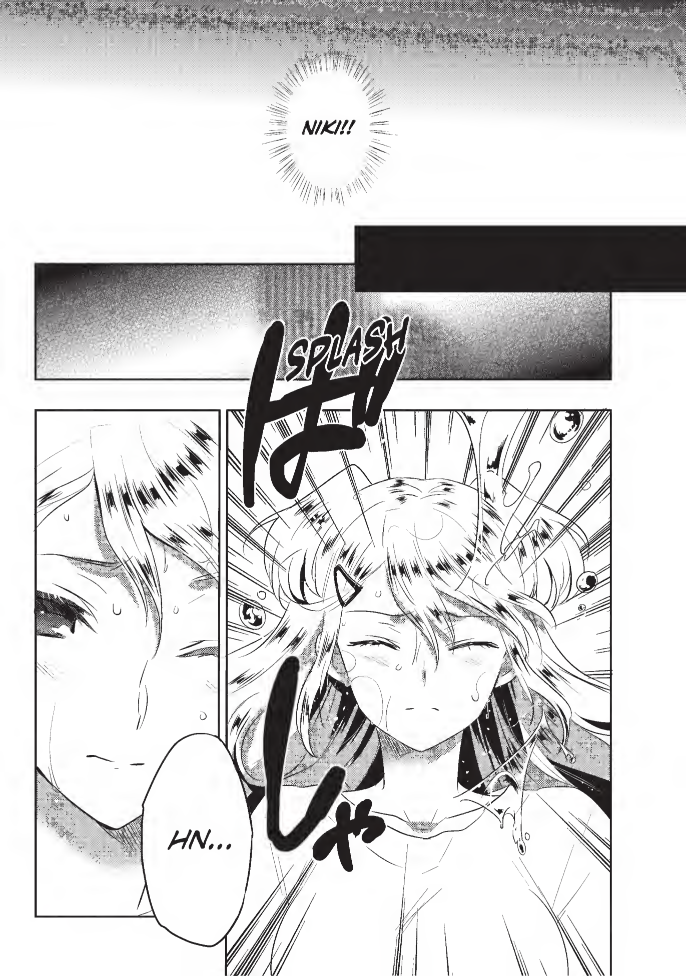

WHAT THE HECK AM I DOING?
I DON'T GET ANY OF THIS.
HUFF
OW...
HUFF
IT HURTS.
HUFF
HARD TO BREATHE.
HOTAKA IS WAITING FOR ME.
NOW.
WHY?
I'M RUNNING AWAY FROM HIM.
WHY?
WHAT AM I SCARED OF?
I...
I JUST HAVE TO...!

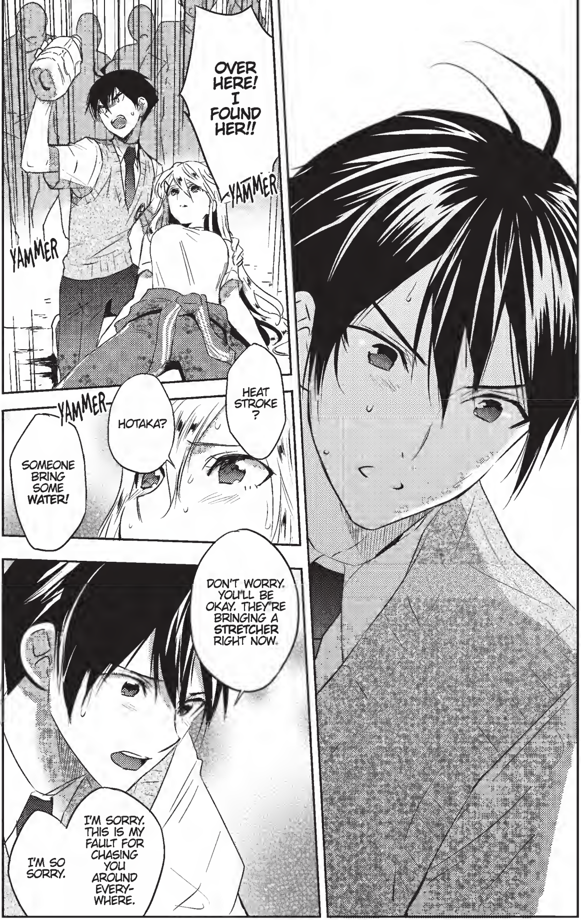

I MEAN...
HOTAKA COULD LIKE HANGING OUT WITH THAT OTHER GIRL MORE THAN ME.
BUT HERE I COME, BARGING IN AND TRAMPLING ALL OVER THAT...
BECAUSE I [redacted] HOTAKA.
HAVING THAT UNREQUITED **WOULD HURT.**
I'M AFRAID THAT, IF I REALLY DO COME TO [redacted] HIM TOO MUCH, SOMEDAY I COULD GET HURT. HE COULD GET HURT. SOMEONE COULD GET HURT.
THAT'S WHY I'M RUNNING AWAY FROM HIM.
[redacted]
......?

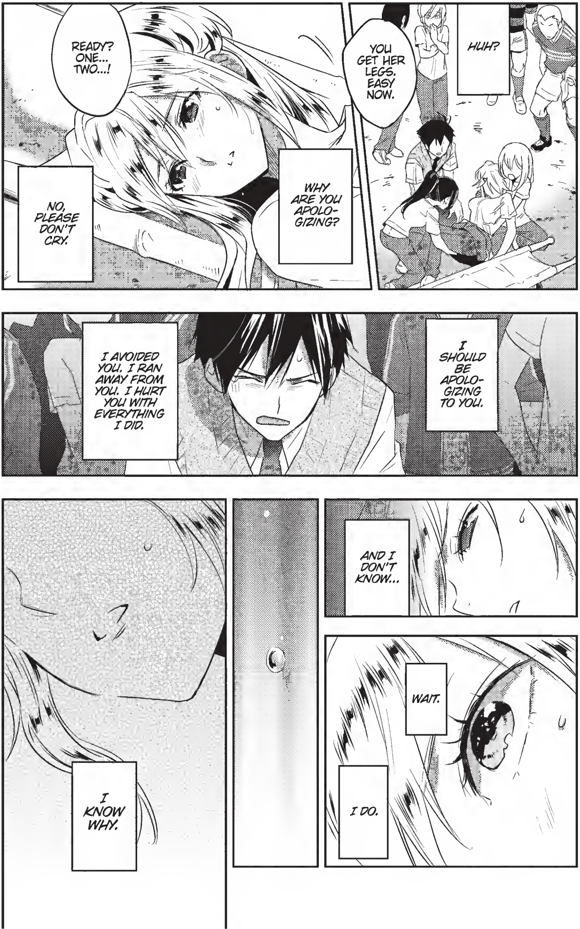

WAIT...
WHAT'S [redacted]?
AH, FORGET IT.


I'M REALLY DIZZY.
HOT.
BURNING UP.
I FEEL... SICK.
WHAT'S HAPPENING TO ME?
I'M SCARED.
SOMEBODY HELP ME!

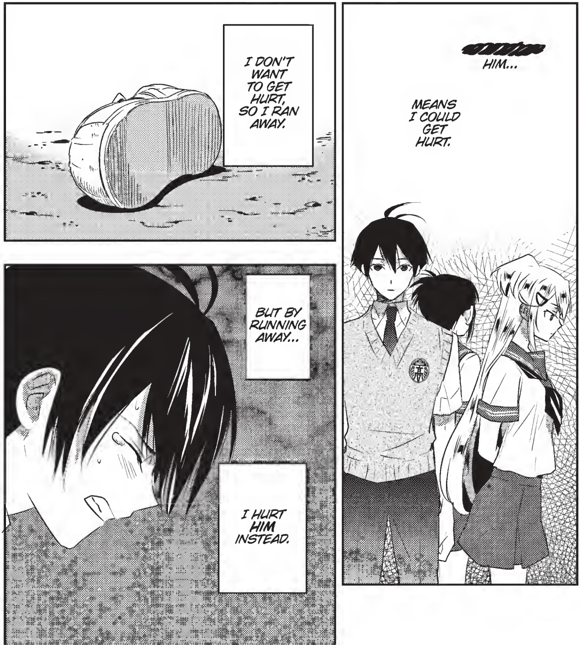


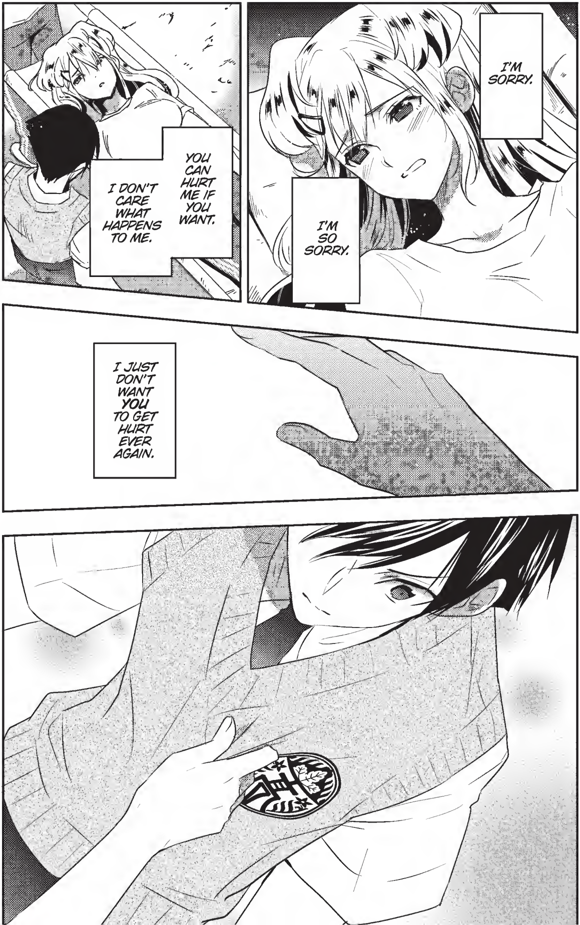

NIKI!!
SPLASH
ばしゃ
HN...

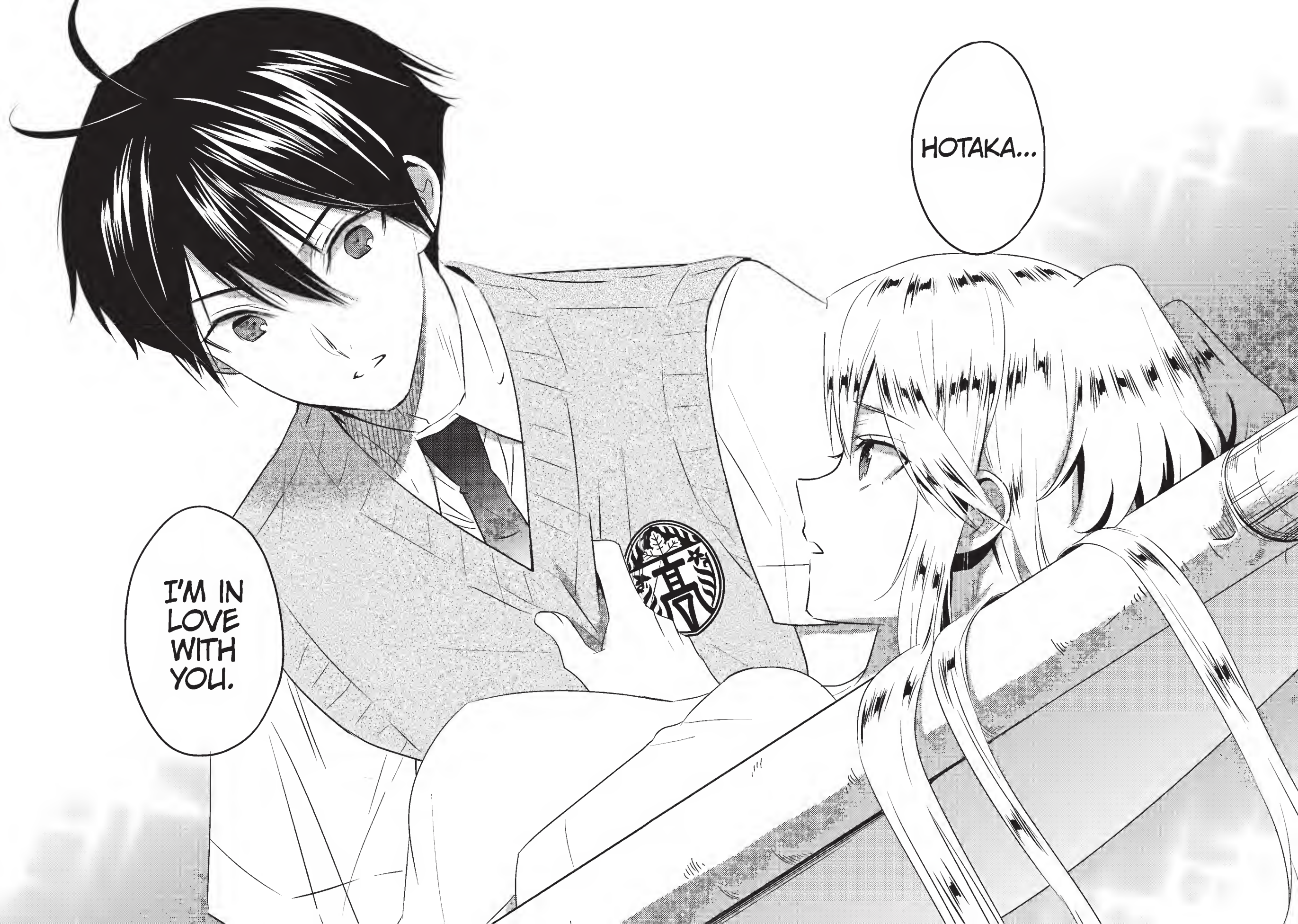

OVER HERE! I FOUND HER!!
YAMMER
YAMMER
HEAT STROKE?
HOTAKA?
YAMMER
SOMEONE BRING SOME WATER!
DON'T WORRY. YOU'LL BE OKAY. THEY'RE BRINGING A STRETCHER RIGHT NOW.
I'M SORRY. THIS IS MY FAULT FOR CHASING YOU AROUND EVERYWHERE.
I'M SO SORRY.

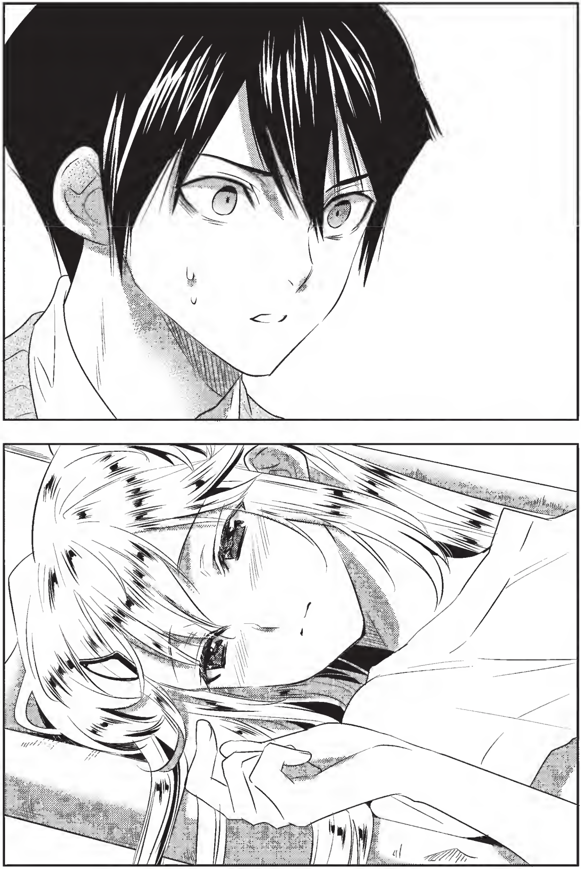

HUH?
YOU GET HER LEGS. EASY NOW.
WHY ARE YOU APOLOGIZING?
READY? ONE... TWO...!
NO, PLEASE DON'T CRY.
I SHOULD BE APOLOGIZING TO YOU.
I AVOIDED YOU. I RAN AWAY FROM YOU. I HURT YOU WITH EVERYTHING I DID.
AND I DON'T KNOW...
WAIT.
I DO.
I KNOW WHY.

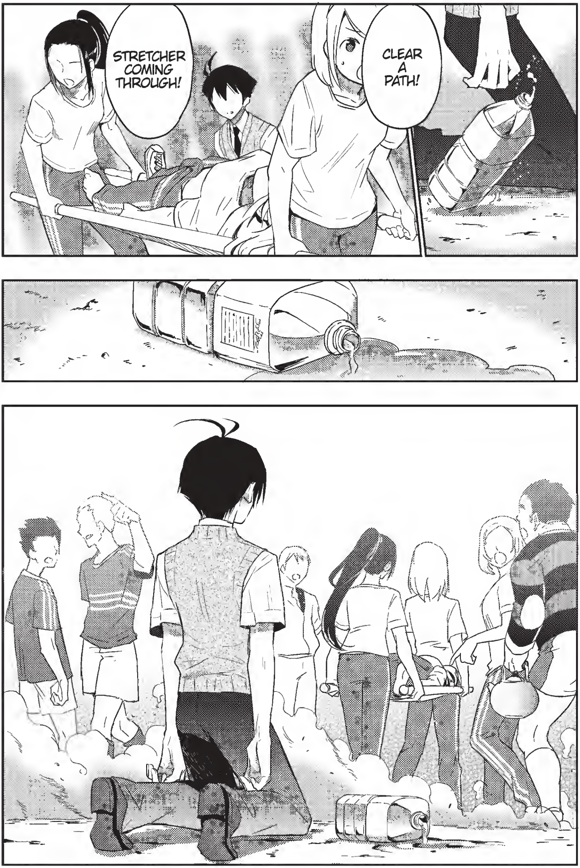
BECAUSE
I
[redacted]
HIM.

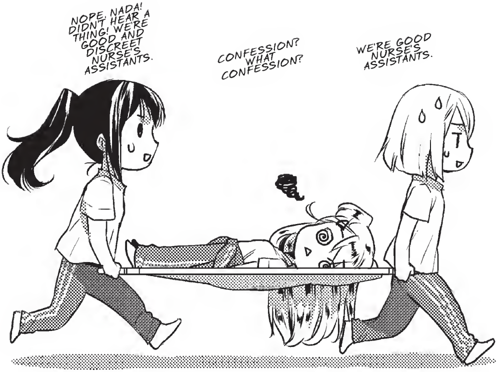

[redacted] HIM...
MEANS I COULD GET HURT.
I DON'T WANT TO GET HURT, SO I RAN AWAY.
BUT BY RUNNING AWAY...
I HURT **HIM** INSTEAD.


I'M SORRY.
I'M SO SORRY.
YOU CAN HURT ME IF YOU WANT.
I DON'T CARE WHAT HAPPENS TO ME.
I JUST DON'T WANT **YOU** TO GET HURT EVER AGAIN.

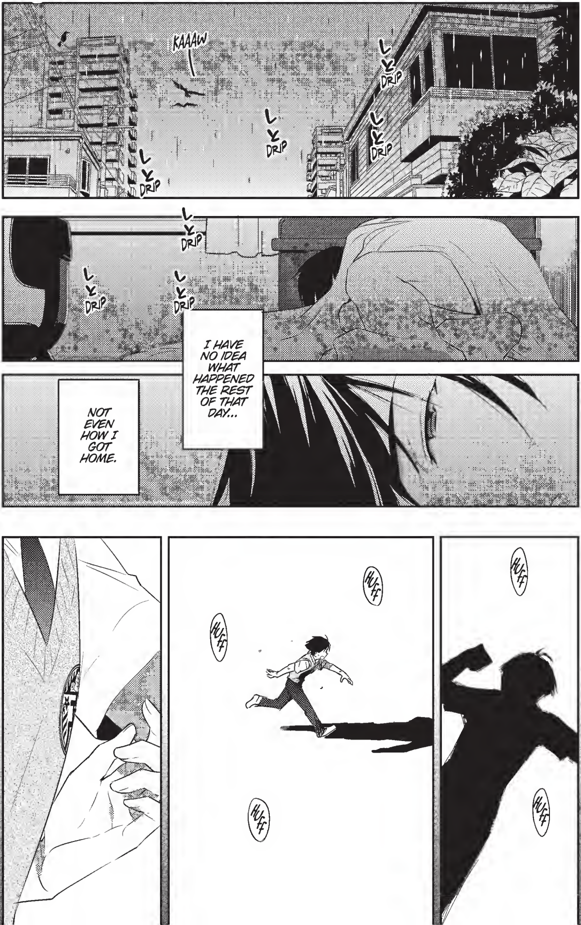

HOTAKA...
I'M IN LOVE WITH YOU.

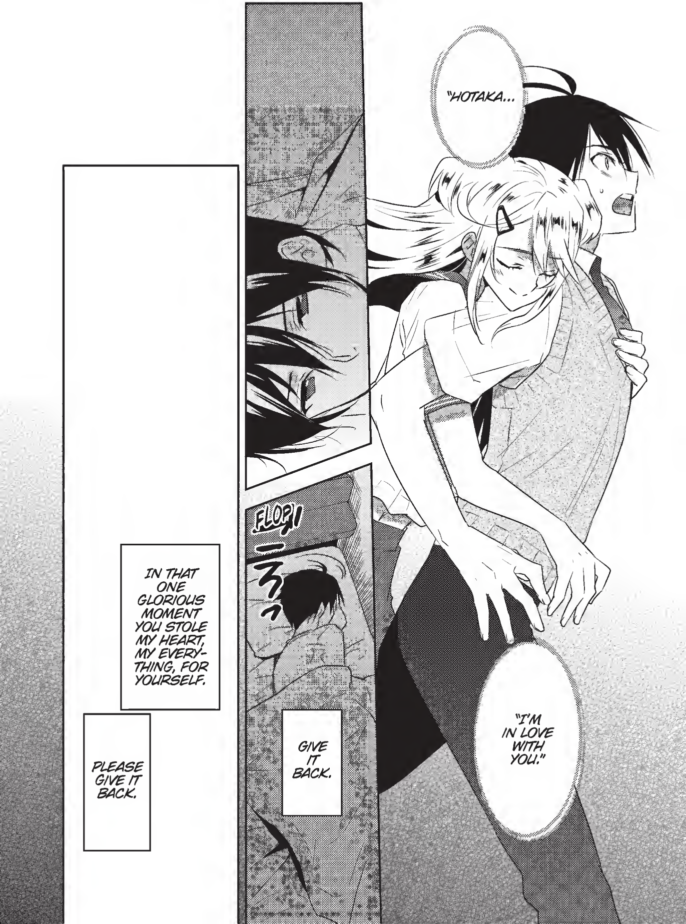



CLEAR A PATH!
STRETCHER COMING THROUGH!

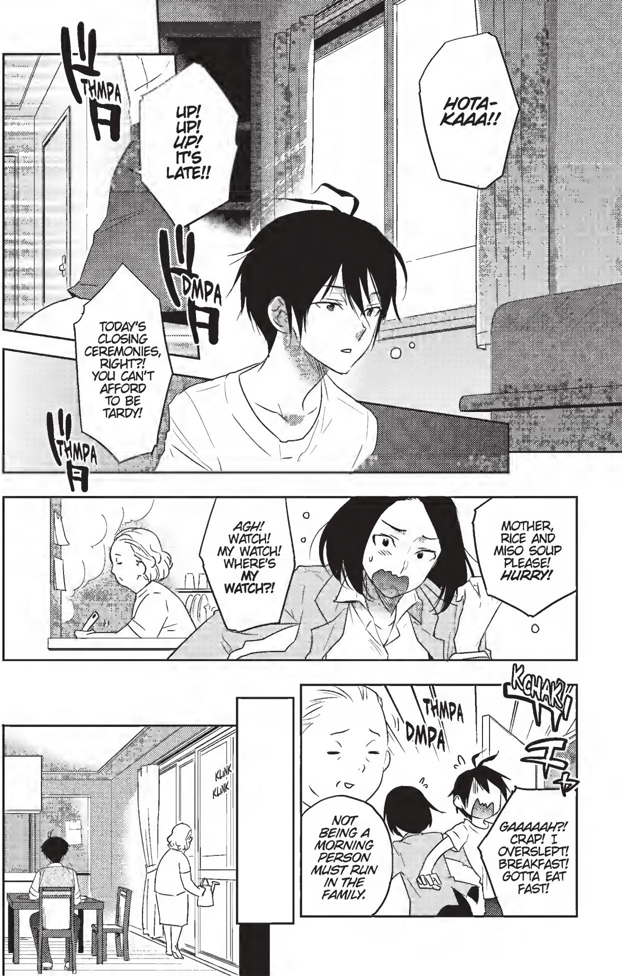

WE'RE GOOD NURSE'S ASSISTANTS.
CONFESSION? WHAT CONFESSION?
NOPE, NADA! DIDN'T HEAR A THING! WE'RE GOOD AND DISCREET NURSE'S ASSISTANTS.

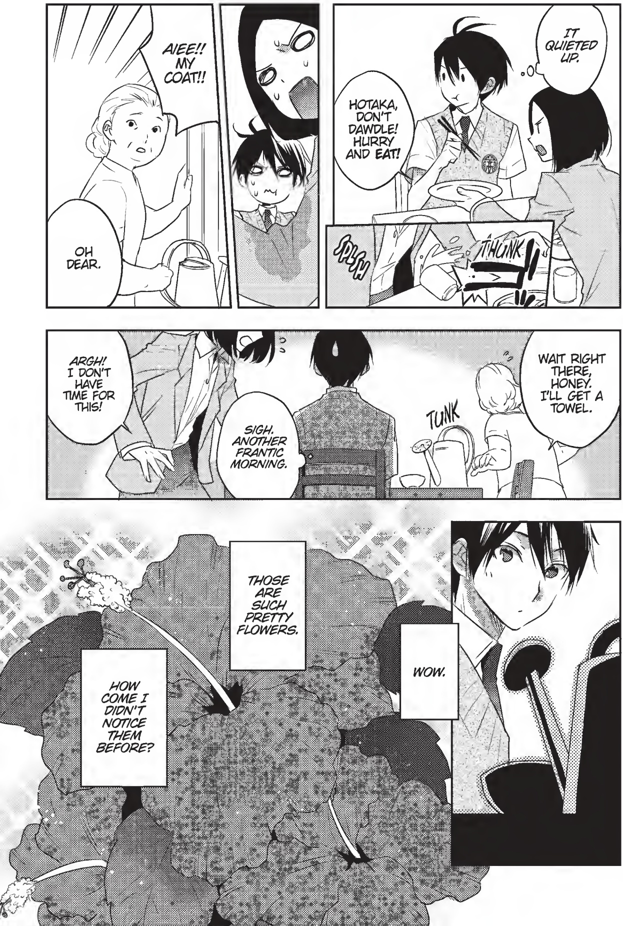
Chapter 12: New Love

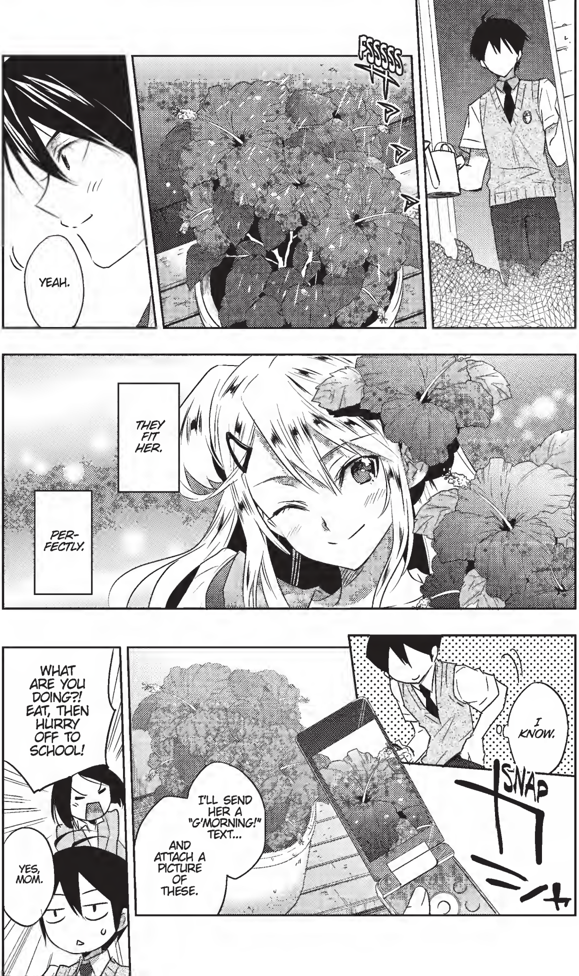

DRIP
DRIP
KAAAW
DRIP
DRIP
DRIP
DRIP
DRIP
I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT HAPPENED THE REST OF THAT DAY...
NOT EVEN HOW I GOT HOME.
HUFF
HUFF
HUFF
HUFF
HUFF

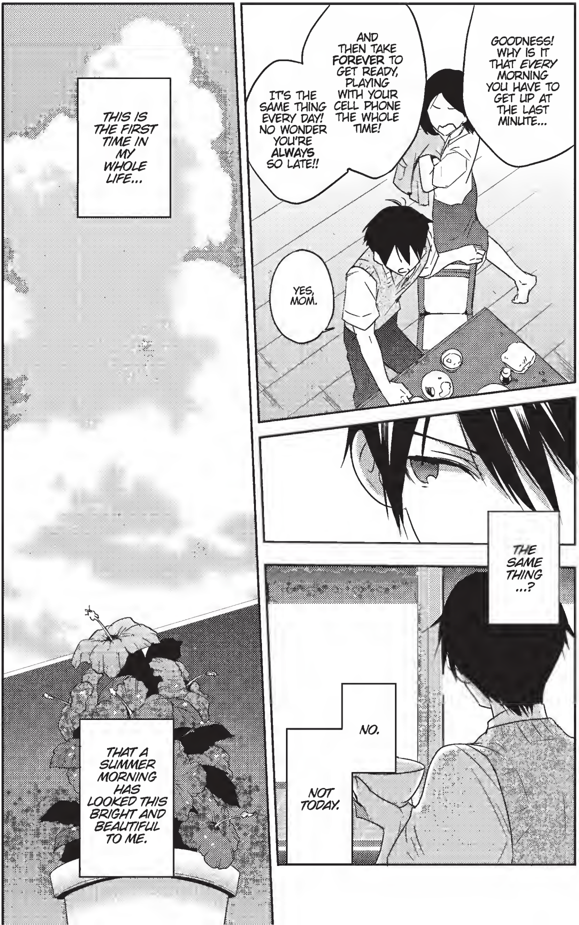

"HOTAKA...
"I'M IN LOVE WITH YOU."
FLOP!
GIVE IT BACK.
IN THAT ONE GLORIOUS MOMENT YOU STOLE MY HEART, MY EVERYTHING, FOR YOURSELF.
PLEASE GIVE IT BACK.

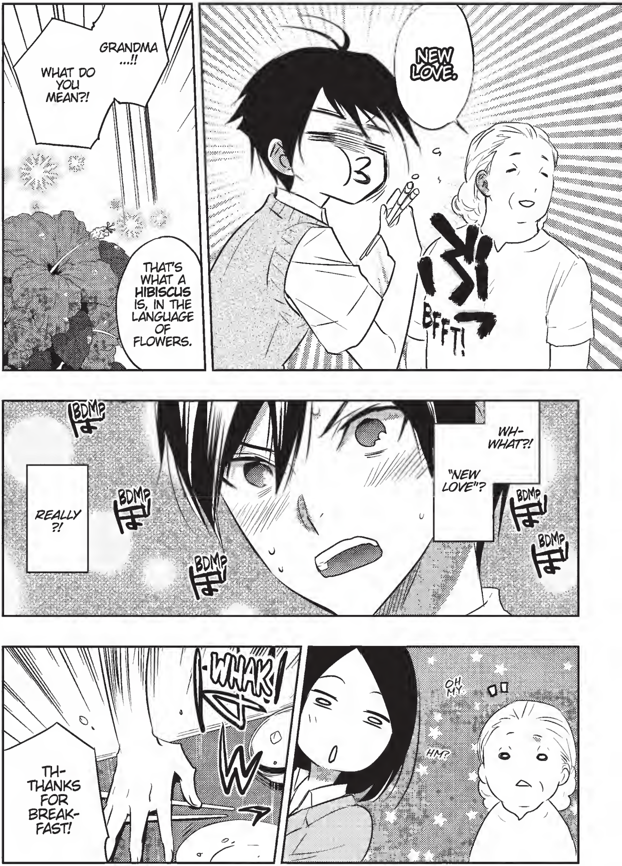
Chapter 12: New Love

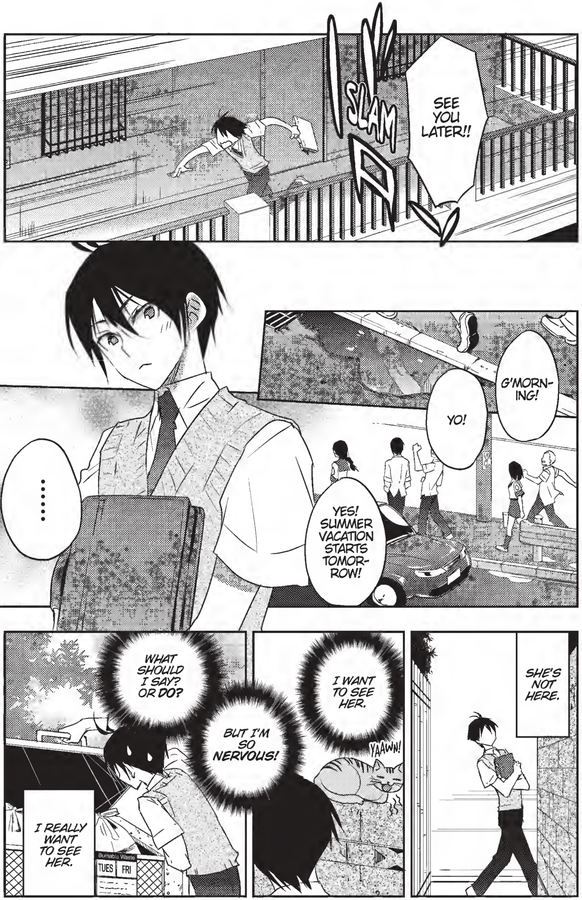

HOTA-KAAA!!
UP! UP! UP! IT'S LATE!!
ドタ THMPA
ドタ DMPA
TODAY'S CLOSING CEREMONIES, RIGHT?! YOU CAN'T AFFORD TO BE TARDY!
ドタ THMPA
MOTHER, RICE AND MISO SOUP PLEASE! HURRY!
AGH! WATCH! MY WATCH! WHERE'S MY WATCH?!
ガチャ KCHAK!
THMPA DMPA
GAAAAAH?! CRAP! I OVERSLEPT! BREAKFAST! GOTTA EAT FAST!
NOT BEING A MORNING PERSON MUST RUN IN THE FAMILY.
KLINK KLINK

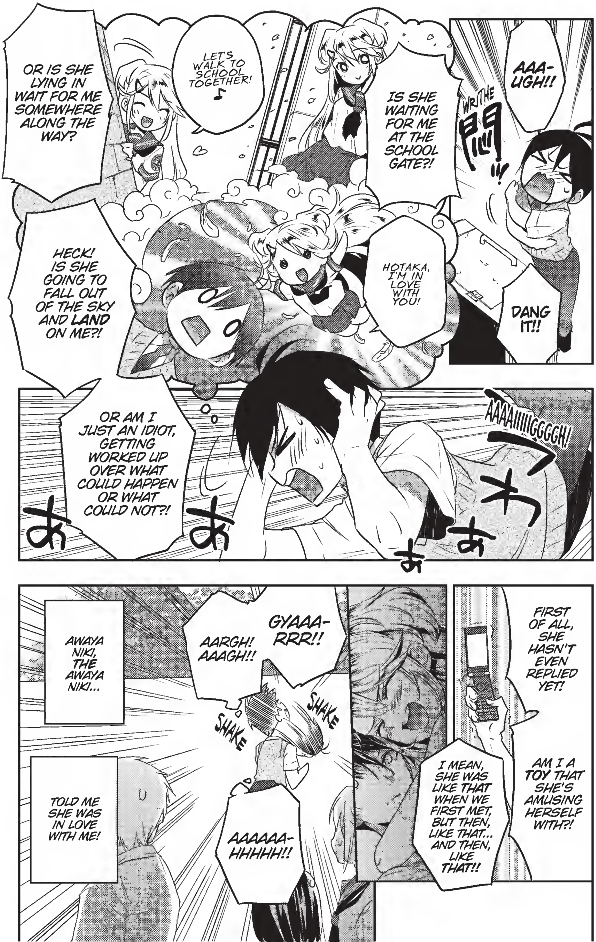

IT QUIETED UP.
HOTAKA, DON'T DAWDLE! HURRY AND EAT!
THUNK
SPLSH
AIEE!! MY COAT!!
OH DEAR.
WAIT RIGHT THERE, HONEY. I'LL GET A TOWEL.
TUNK
SIGH. ANOTHER FRANTIC MORNING.
ARGH! I DON'T HAVE TIME FOR THIS!
WOW.
THOSE ARE SUCH PRETTY FLOWERS.
HOW COME I DIDN'T NOTICE THEM BEFORE?

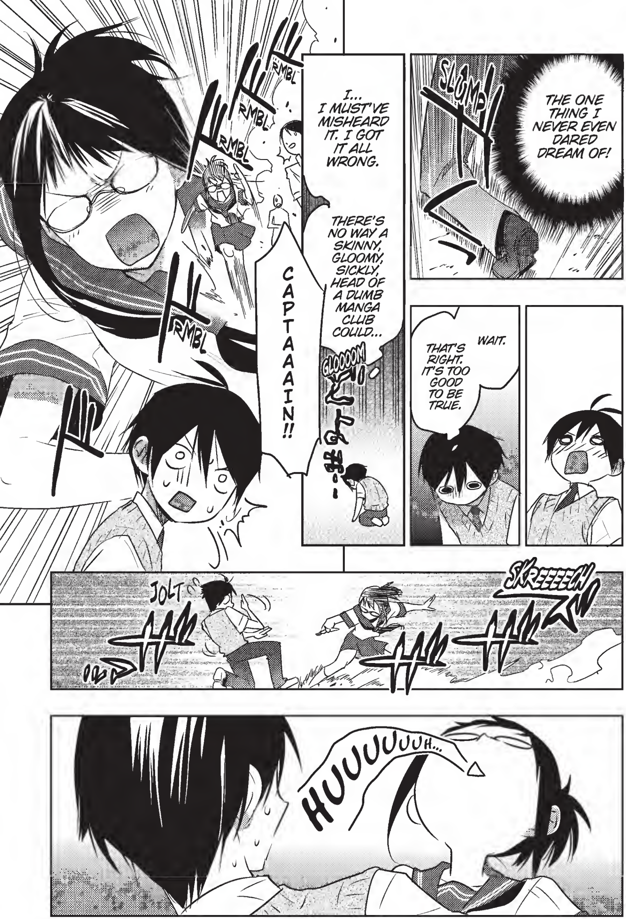

FSSSSS
YEAH.
THEY FIT HER.
PERFECTLY.
I KNOW.
SNAP
I'LL SEND HER A "G'MORNING!" TEXT...
AND ATTACH A PICTURE OF THESE.
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?! EAT, THEN HURRY OFF TO SCHOOL!
YES, MOM.

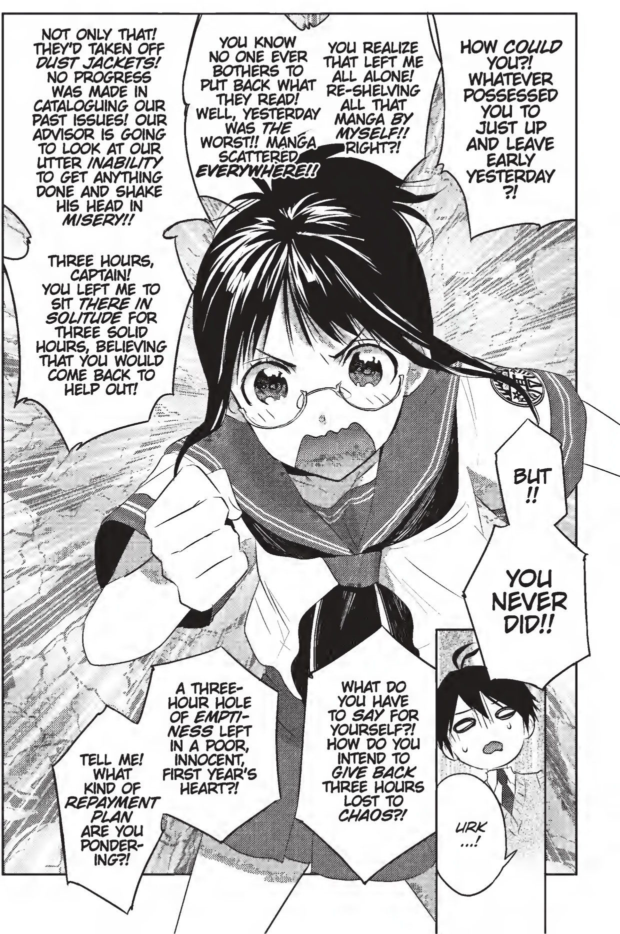

GOODNESS! WHY IS IT THAT *EVERY* MORNING YOU HAVE TO GET UP AT THE LAST MINUTE...
AND THEN TAKE **FOREVER** TO GET READY, PLAYING WITH YOUR CELL PHONE THE WHOLE TIME!
IT'S THE SAME THING EVERY DAY! NO WONDER YOU'RE **ALWAYS** SO LATE!!
YES, MOM.
THE SAME THING ...?
NO.
NOT TODAY.
THIS IS THE FIRST TIME IN MY WHOLE LIFE...
THAT A SUMMER MORNING HAS LOOKED THIS BRIGHT AND BEAUTIFUL TO ME.

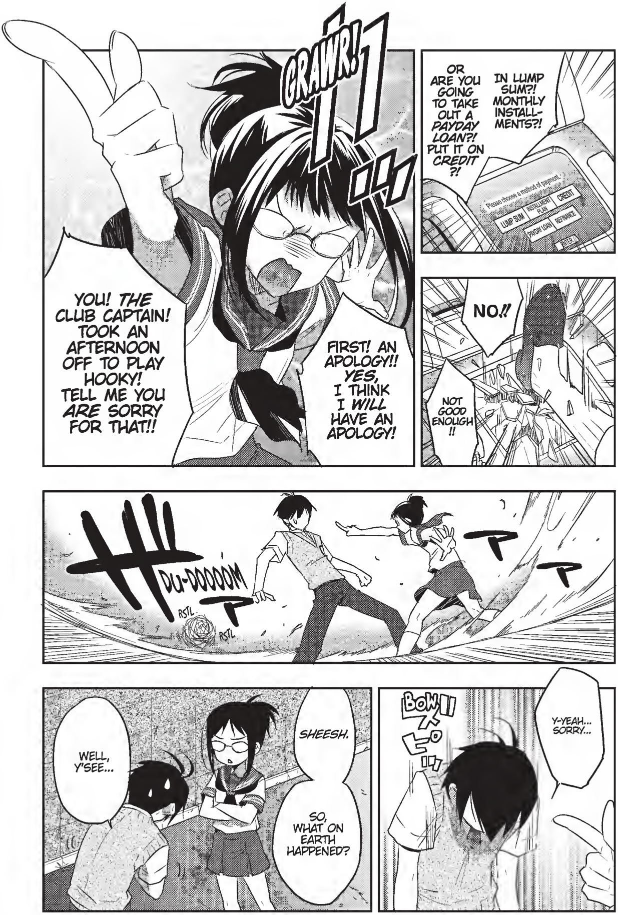

NEW LOVE.
ぶっ
BFFT!
GRANDMA ...!!
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?!
THAT'S WHAT A HIBISCUS IS, IN THE LANGUAGE OF FLOWERS.
WH- WHAT?!
"NEW LOVE"?
BDMP
BDMP
BDMP
BDMP
BDMP
REALLY ?!
OH MY
HM?
WHAK!
TH- THANKS FOR BREAK- FAST!

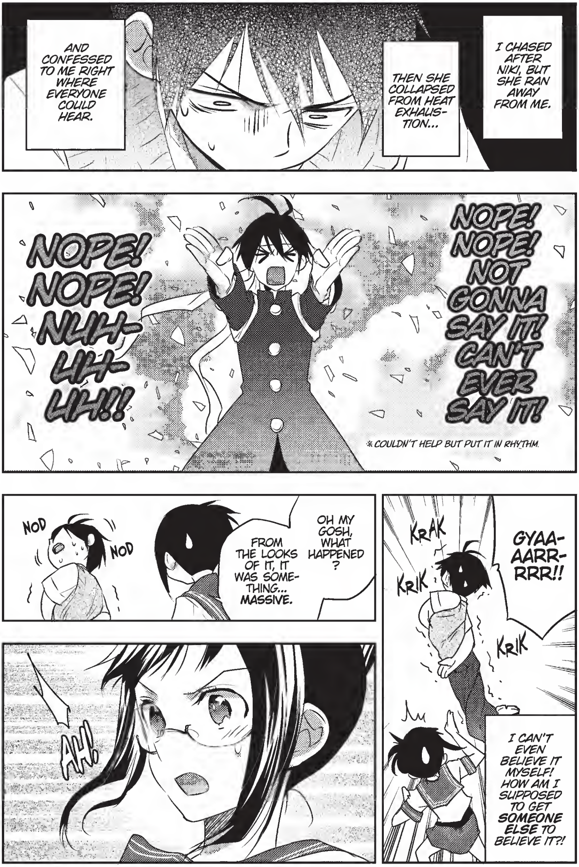

SLAM
SEE YOU LATER!!
G'MORNING!
YO!
YES! SUMMER VACATION STARTS TOMORROW!
......
SHE'S NOT HERE.
YAAWN!
I WANT TO SEE HER.
BUT I'M SO NERVOUS!
WHAT SHOULD I SAY? OR DO?
I REALLY WANT TO SEE HER.
Burnable Waste
TUES FRI

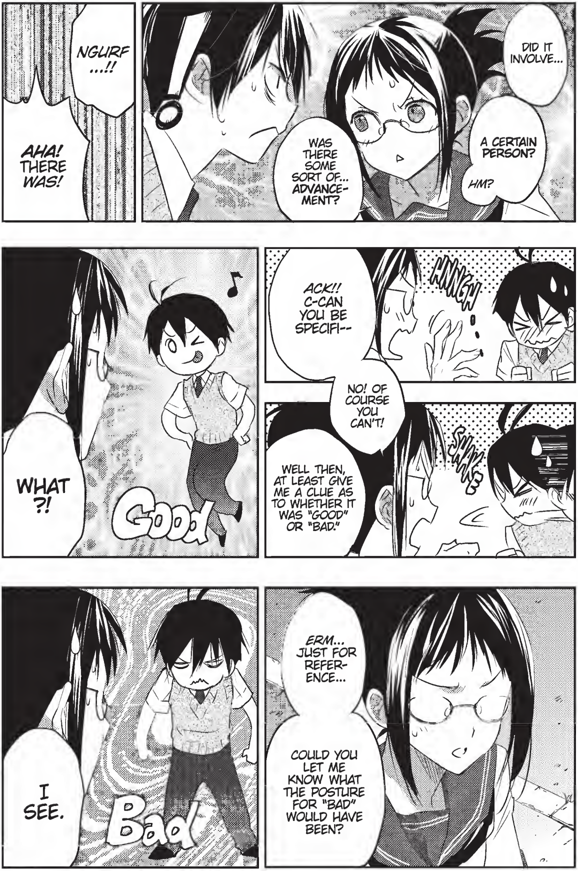

AAA-UGH!!
WRITHE 悶!!
DANG IT!!
IS SHE WAITING FOR ME AT THE SCHOOL GATE?!
LET'S WALK TO SCHOOL TOGETHER! ♪
OR IS SHE LYING IN WAIT FOR ME SOMEWHERE ALONG THE WAY?
HOTAKA, I'M IN LOVE WITH YOU!
HECK! IS SHE GOING TO FALL OUT OF THE SKY AND **LAND** ON ME?!
AAAAIIIIGGGGH! わ
あ あ あ あ
OR AM I JUST AN IDIOT, GETTING WORKED UP OVER WHAT COULD HAPPEN OR WHAT COULD NOT?!
FIRST OF ALL, SHE HASN'T EVEN REPLIED YET!
AM I A TOY THAT SHE'S AMUSING HERSELF WITH?!
I MEAN, SHE WAS LIKE THAT WHEN WE FIRST MET, BUT THEN, LIKE THAT... AND THEN, LIKE THAT!!
GYAAA-RRR!!
AARGH! AAAGH!!
SHAKE
SHAKE
AAAAAA-HHHHH!!
AWAYA NIKI, **THE** AWAYA NIKI...
TOLD ME SHE WAS IN LOVE WITH ME!

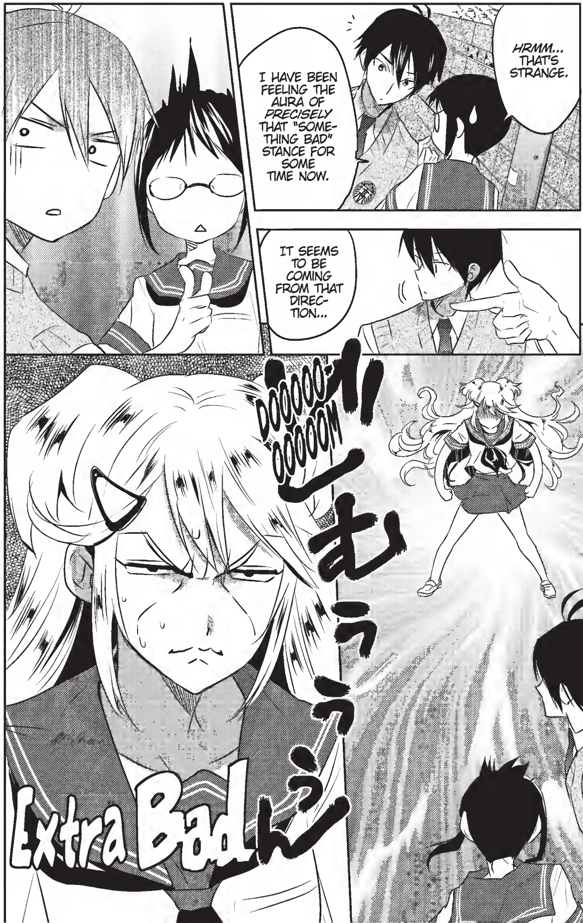

SLUMP
THE ONE THING I NEVER EVEN DARED DREAM OF!
I... I MUST'VE MISHEARD IT. I GOT IT ALL WRONG.
THERE'S NO WAY A SKINNY, GLOOMY, SICKLY, HEAD OF A DUMB MANGA CLUB COULD...
GLOOOOM
WAIT.
THAT'S RIGHT. IT'S TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE.
RMBL
RMBL
RMBL
RMBL
CAPTAAAAAIN!!
SKREEEECH
JOLT
HUUUUUUH...

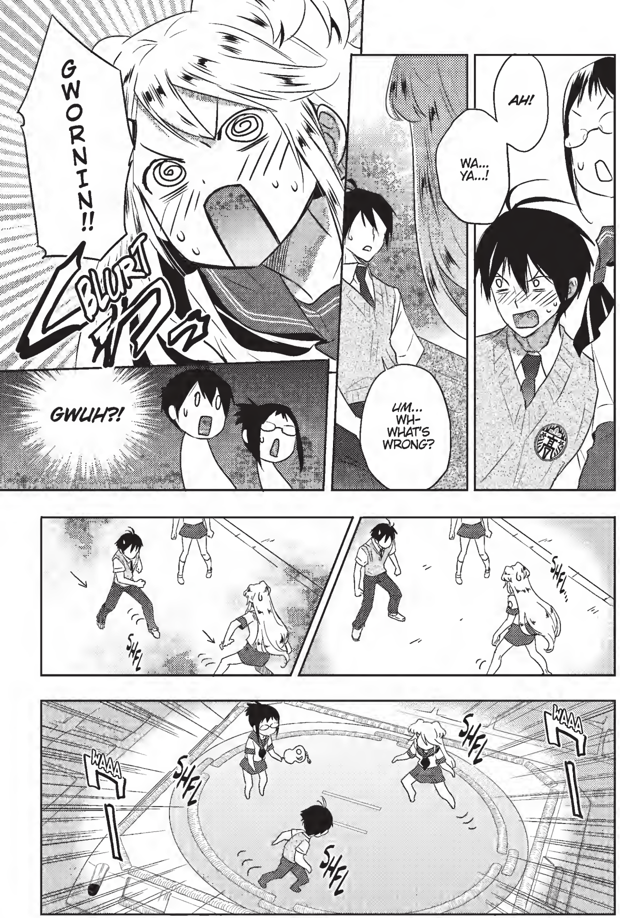

HOW COULD YOU?! WHATEVER POSSESSED YOU TO JUST UP AND LEAVE EARLY YESTERDAY?!
YOU REALIZE THAT LEFT ME ALL ALONE! RE-SHELVING ALL THAT MANGA BY MYSELF!! RIGHT?!
YOU KNOW NO ONE EVER BOTHERS TO PUT BACK WHAT THEY READ! WELL, YESTERDAY WAS THE WORST!! MANGA SCATTERED EVERYWHERE!!
NOT ONLY THAT! THEY'D TAKEN OFF DUST JACKETS! NO PROGRESS WAS MADE IN CATALOGUING OUR PAST ISSUES! OUR ADVISOR IS GOING TO LOOK AT OUR UTTER INABILITY TO GET ANYTHING DONE AND SHAKE HIS HEAD IN MISERY!!
THREE HOURS, CAPTAIN! YOU LEFT ME TO SIT THERE IN SOLITUDE FOR THREE SOLID HOURS, BELIEVING THAT YOU WOULD COME BACK TO HELP OUT!
BUT!!
YOU NEVER DID!!
WHAT DO YOU HAVE TO SAY FOR YOURSELF?! HOW DO YOU INTEND TO GIVE BACK THREE HOURS LOST TO CHAOS?!
A THREE-HOUR HOLE OF EMPTINESS LEFT IN A POOR, INNOCENT, FIRST YEAR'S HEART?!
TELL ME! WHAT KIND OF REPAYMENT PLAN ARE YOU PONDERING?!
URK ...!

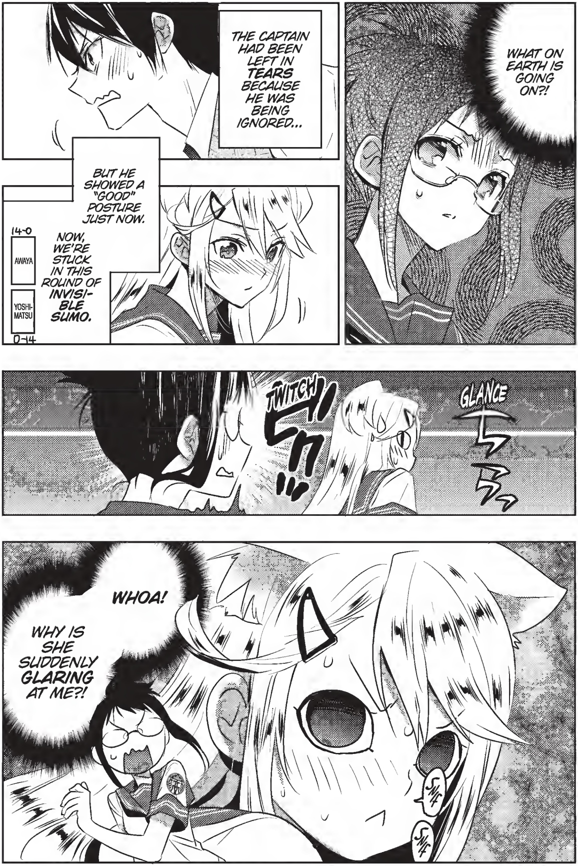

IN LUMP SUM?! MONTHLY INSTALLMENTS?!
OR ARE YOU GOING TO TAKE OUT A *PAYDAY LOAN*?! PUT IT ON *CREDIT*?!
Please choose a method of payment.
LUMP SUM
INSTALLMENT PLAN
CREDIT
PAYDAY LOAN
REFINANCE
ENTER
NO!!
NOT GOOD ENOUGH!!
CRAWR!!
FIRST! AN APOLOGY!! *YES*, I THINK I *WILL* HAVE AN APOLOGY!
YOU! *THE* CLUB CAPTAIN! TOOK AN AFTERNOON OFF TO PLAY HOOKY! TELL ME YOU *ARE* SORRY FOR THAT!!
DU-DOOOOM
RSTL
RSTL
BOW!!
Y-YEAH... SORRY...
SHEESH.
SO, WHAT ON EARTH HAPPENED?
WELL, Y'SEE...

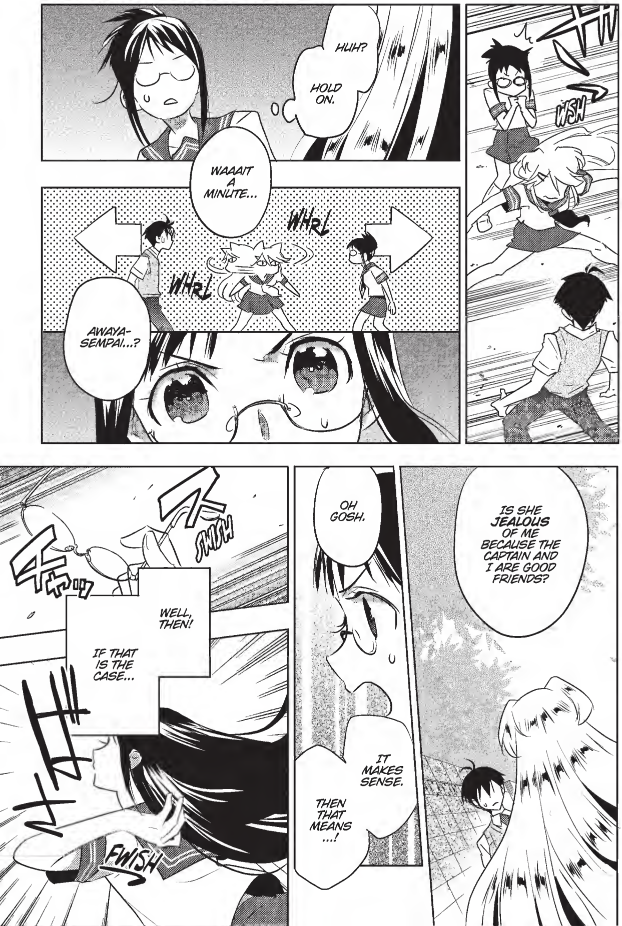

I CHASED AFTER NIKI, BUT SHE RAN AWAY FROM ME.
THEN SHE COLLAPSED FROM HEAT EXHAUSTION...
AND CONFESSED TO ME RIGHT WHERE EVERYONE COULD HEAR.
NOPE! NOPE! NOT GONNA SAY IT! CAN'T EVER SAY IT!
NOPE! NOPE! NUH-UH-UH!!
※COULDN'T HELP BUT PUT IT IN RHYTHM.
KRAK
KRIK
KRIK
GYAAARRRR!!
I CAN'T EVEN BELIEVE IT MYSELF! HOW AM I SUPPOSED TO GET SOMEONE ELSE TO BELIEVE IT?!
OH MY GOSH, WHAT HAPPENED?
FROM THE LOOKS OF IT, IT WAS SOMETHING... MASSIVE.
NOD
NOD
AH!

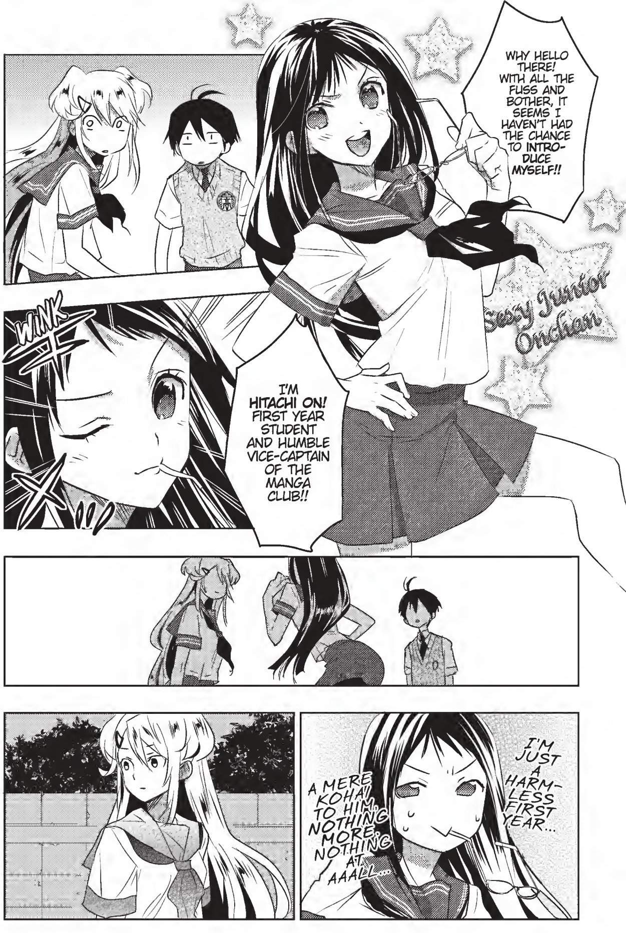

DID IT INVOLVE...
A CERTAIN PERSON?
HM?
WAS THERE SOME SORT OF... ADVANCEMENT?
NGURF ...!!
AHA! THERE WAS!
ACK!! C-CAN YOU BE SPECIFI--
HNNGH
NO! OF COURSE YOU CAN'T!
WELL THEN, AT LEAST GIVE ME A CLUE AS TO WHETHER IT WAS "GOOD" OR "BAD."
SHAKE
WHAT?!
Good
ERM... JUST FOR REFERENCE...
COULD YOU LET ME KNOW WHAT THE POSTURE FOR "BAD" WOULD HAVE BEEN?
I SEE.
Bad

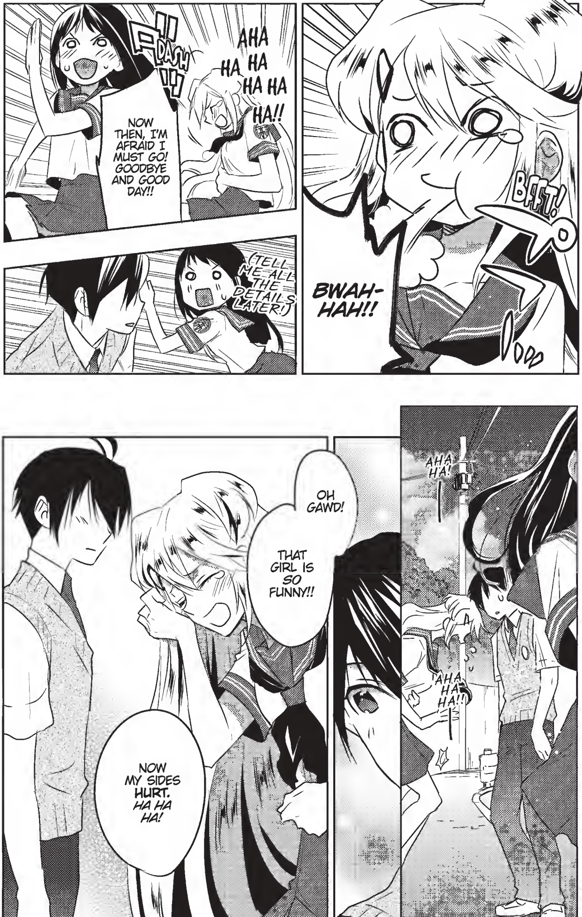

HRMM... THAT'S STRANGE.
I HAVE BEEN FEELING THE AURA OF *PRECISELY* THAT "SOMETHING BAD" STANCE FOR SOME TIME NOW.
IT SEEMS TO BE COMING FROM THAT DIRECTION...
DOOOOO-OOOOOM
ーむぅぅぅ
Extra Bad

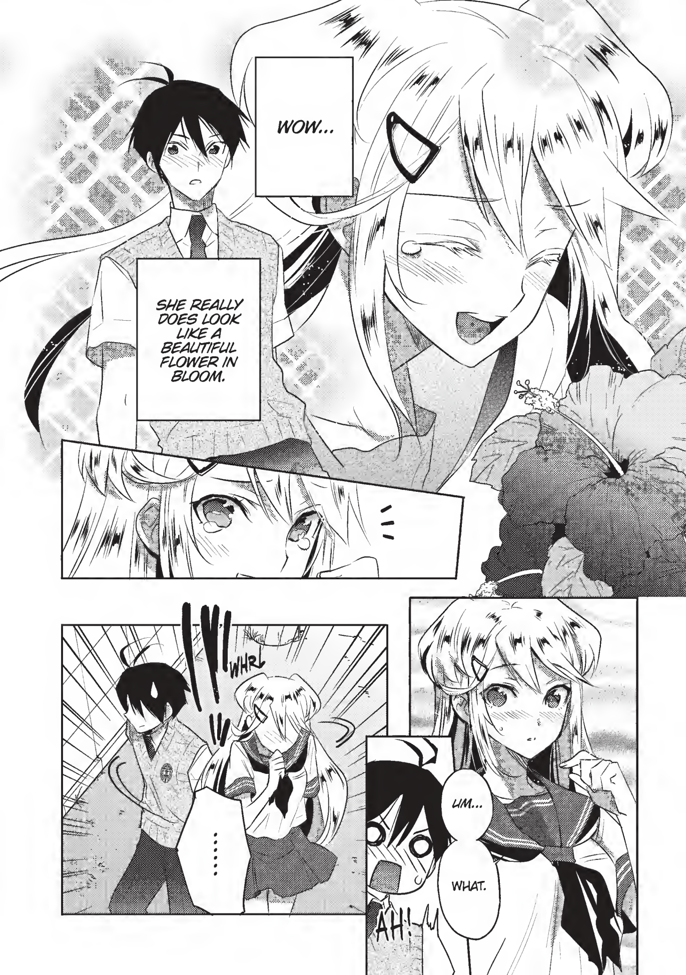

AH!
WA... YA...!
UM... WH-WHAT'S WRONG?
GWORNIN!!
BLURT
GWUH?!
SHFL...
SHFL
WAAA
SHFL
SHFL
SHFL
WAAA

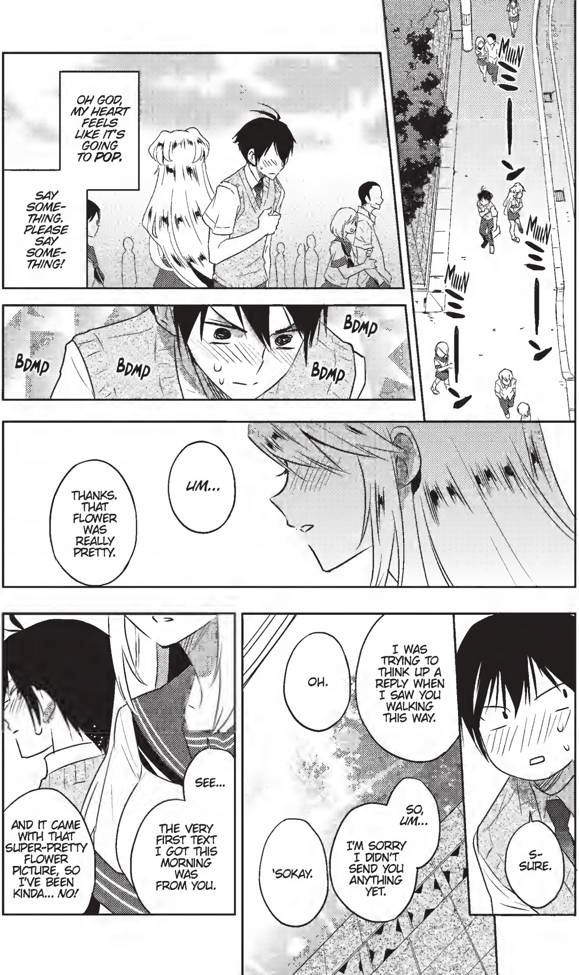

WHAT ON EARTH IS GOING ON?!
THE CAPTAIN HAD BEEN LEFT IN **TEARS** BECAUSE HE WAS BEING IGNORED...
BUT HE SHOWED A "GOOD" POSTURE JUST NOW.
14-0
AWAYA
YOSHIMATSU
0-14
NOW, WE'RE STUCK IN THIS ROUND OF **INVISIBLE SUMO.**
GLANCE
TWITCH
WHOA!
WHY IS SHE SUDDENLY **GLARING** AT ME?!
SNIF
SNIF

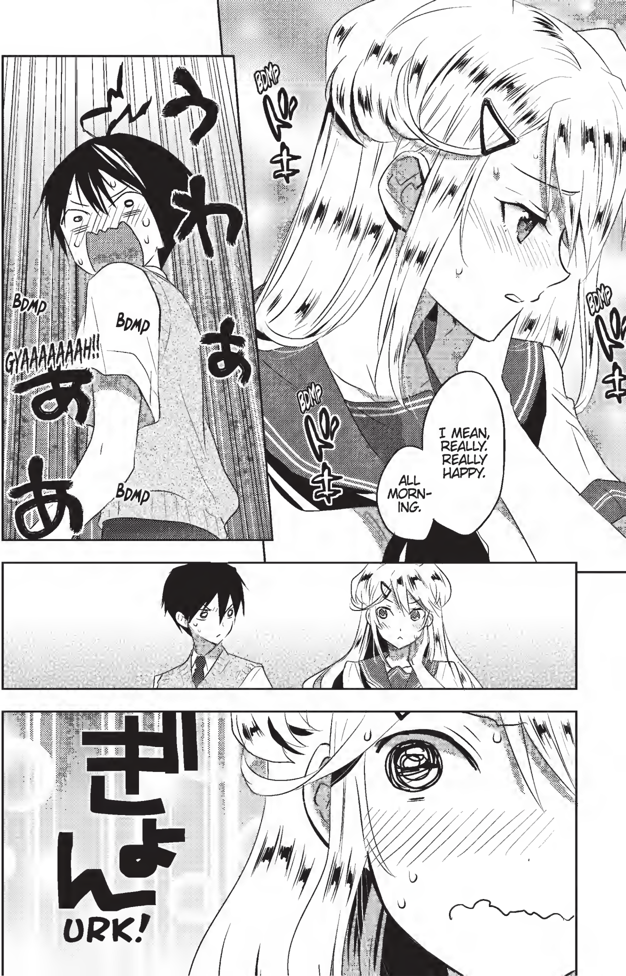

WSH
HUH?
HOLD ON.
WAAAIT A MINUTE...
WHRL
WHRL
AWAYA-SEMPAI...?
IS SHE **JEALOUS** OF ME BECAUSE THE CAPTAIN AND I ARE GOOD FRIENDS?
OH GOSH.
IT MAKES SENSE.
THEN THAT MEANS ...!
SWISH
WELL, THEN!
IF THAT IS THE CASE...
FWISH

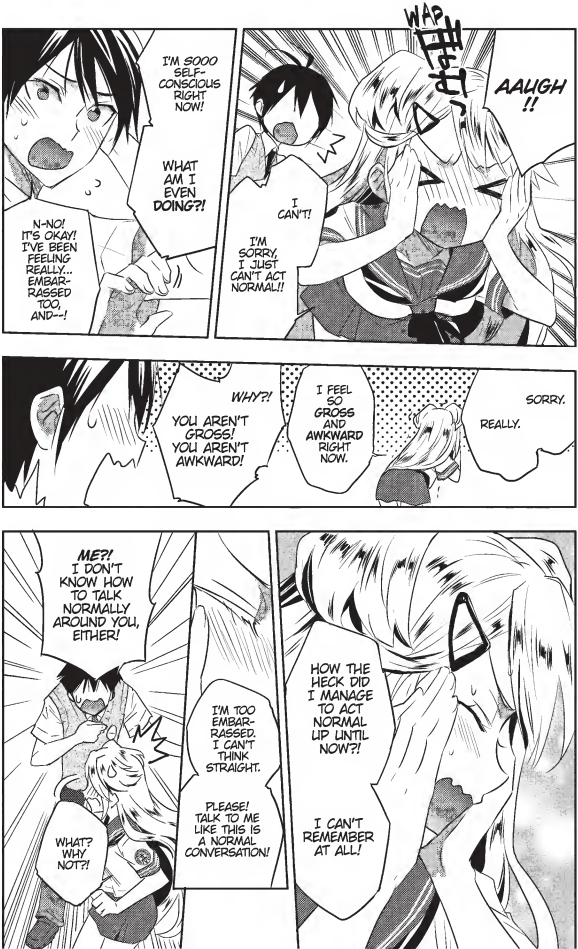

WHY HELLO THERE! WITH ALL THE FUSS AND BOTHER, IT SEEMS I HAVEN'T HAD THE CHANCE TO INTRODUCE MYSELF!!
Sexy Junior Onchan
WINK
I'M HITACHI ON! FIRST YEAR STUDENT AND HUMBLE VICE-CAPTAIN OF THE MANGA CLUB!!
I'M JUST A HARMLESS FIRST YEAR...
A MERE KOHAI TO HIM, NOTHING MORE, NOTHING AT AAALL...

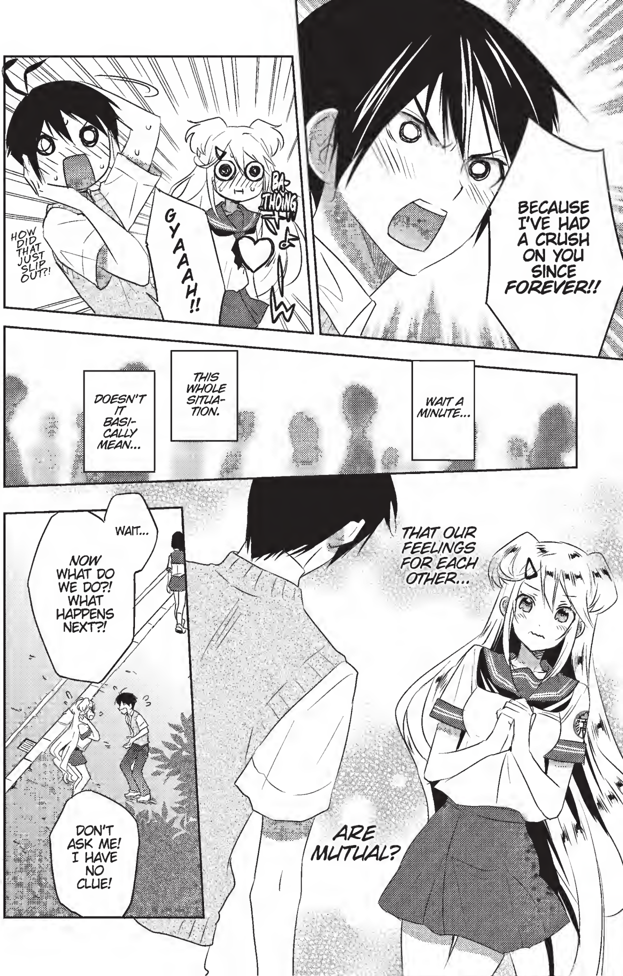

BFFT!
BWAH-HAH!!
DASH
AHA HA HA HA HA HA!!
NOW THEN, I'M AFRAID I MUST GO! GOODBYE AND GOOD DAY!!
(TELL ME ALL THE DETAILS LATER!)
AHA HA!
AHA HA HA!!
OH GAWD!
THAT GIRL IS SO FUNNY!!
NOW MY SIDES HURT. HA HA HA!

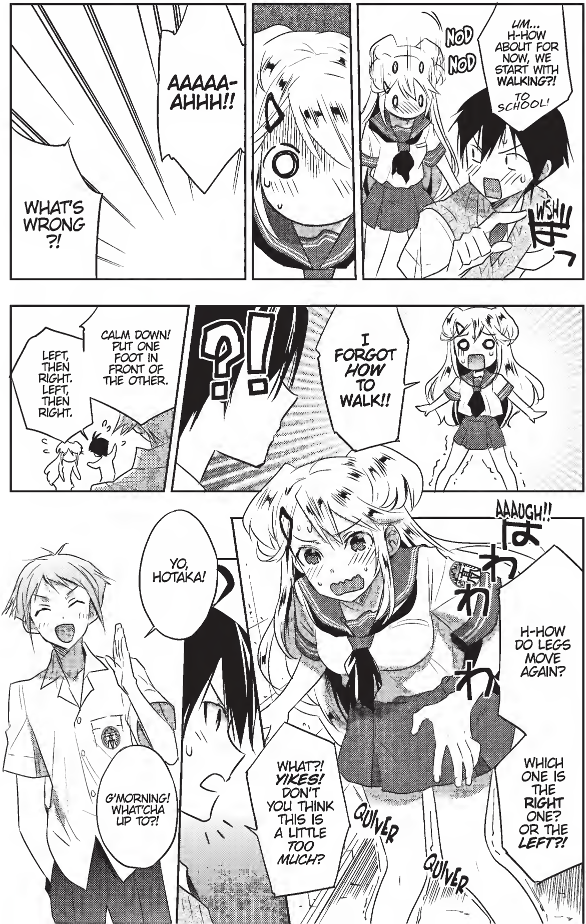

WOW...
SHE REALLY DOES LOOK LIKE A BEAUTIFUL FLOWER IN BLOOM.
UM...
WHAT.
AH!
WHRL
......

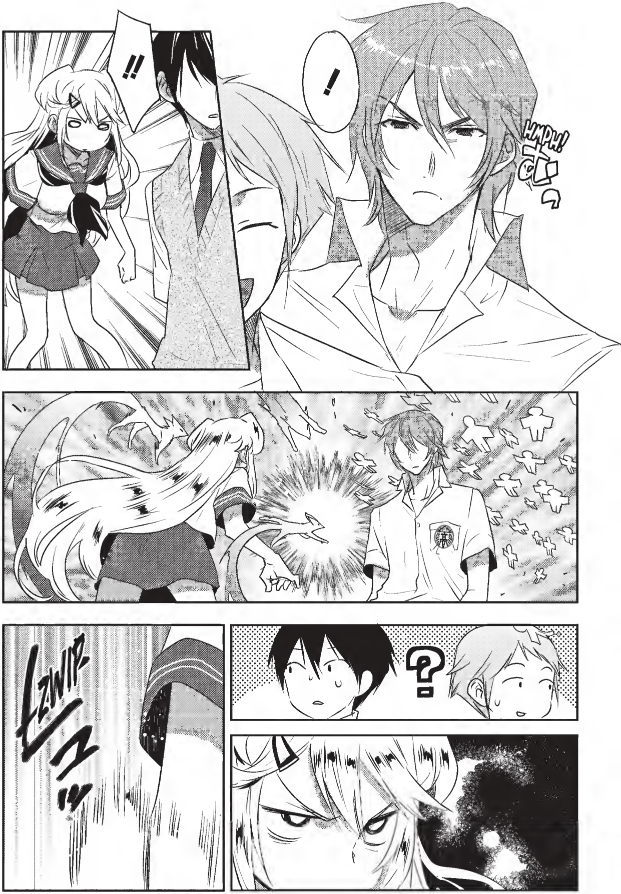

MIIIN
MIIIN
MIIIN
OH GOD, MY HEART FEELS LIKE IT'S GOING TO POP.
SAY SOMETHING. PLEASE SAY SOMETHING!
BDMP
BDMP
BDMP
BDMP
UM...
THANKS. THAT FLOWER WAS REALLY PRETTY.
S-SURE.
I WAS TRYING TO THINK UP A REPLY WHEN I SAW YOU WALKING THIS WAY.
OH.
SO, UM... I'M SORRY I DIDN'T SEND YOU ANYTHING YET.
'SOKAY.
SEE...
THE VERY FIRST TEXT I GOT THIS MORNING WAS FROM YOU.
AND IT CAME WITH THAT SUPER-PRETTY FLOWER PICTURE, SO I'VE BEEN KINDA... NO!

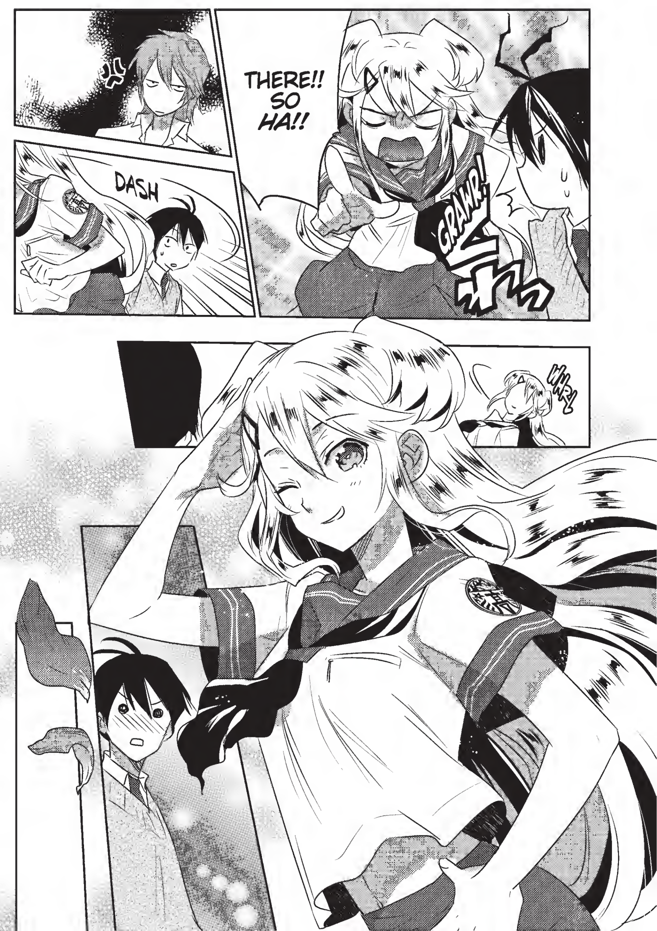

BDMP
ドキ
I MEAN, REALLY. REALLY HAPPY.
ALL MORNING.
BDMP
ドキ
BDMP
ドキ
うわぁああ
GYAAAAAAAH!!
BDMP
BDMP
BDMP
ぎょん
URK!

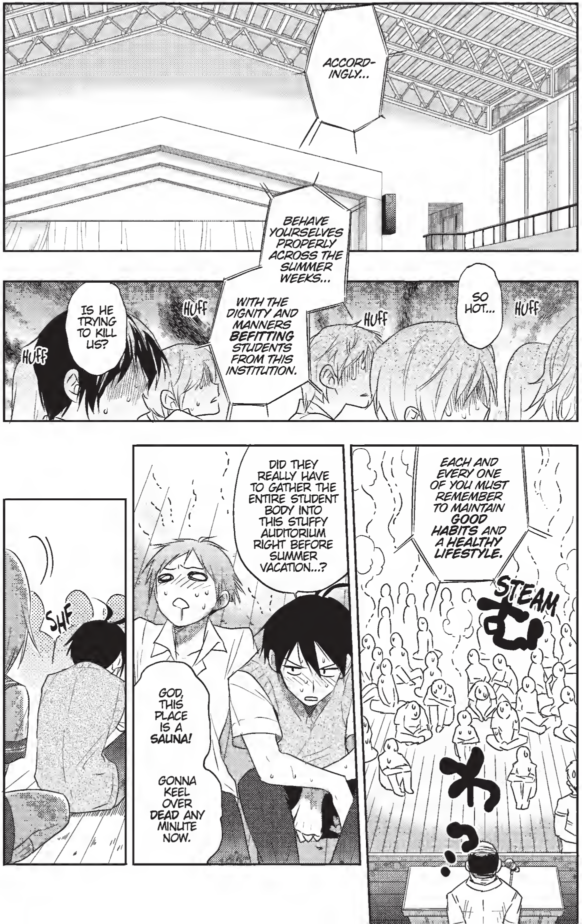

WAP
AAUGH!!
I CAN'T!
I'M SORRY, I JUST CAN'T ACT NORMAL!!
I'M SOOO SELF-CONSCIOUS RIGHT NOW!
WHAT AM I EVEN DOING?!
N-NO! IT'S OKAY! I'VE BEEN FEELING REALLY... EMBARRASSED TOO, AND--!
SORRY.
REALLY.
I FEEL SO GROSS AND AWKWARD RIGHT NOW.
WHY?!
YOU AREN'T GROSS! YOU AREN'T AWKWARD!
HOW THE HECK DID I MANAGE TO ACT NORMAL UP UNTIL NOW?!
I CAN'T REMEMBER AT ALL!
ME?! I DON'T KNOW HOW TO TALK NORMALLY AROUND YOU, EITHER!
I'M TOO EMBARRASSED. I CAN'T THINK STRAIGHT.
PLEASE! TALK TO ME LIKE THIS IS A NORMAL CONVERSATION!
WHAT? WHY NOT?!

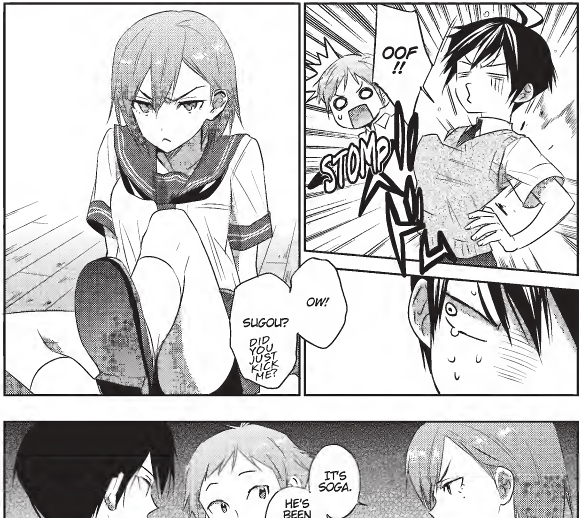

BECAUSE I'VE HAD A CRUSH ON YOU SINCE *FOREVER!!*
GYAAAAH!!
BA-THOING
HOW DID THAT JUST SLIP OUT?!
WAIT A MINUTE...
THIS WHOLE SITUATION.
DOESN'T IT BASICALLY MEAN...
THAT OUR FEELINGS FOR EACH OTHER...
ARE MUTUAL?
WAIT... *NOW WHAT DO WE DO?!* WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?!
DON'T ASK ME! I HAVE NO CLUE!

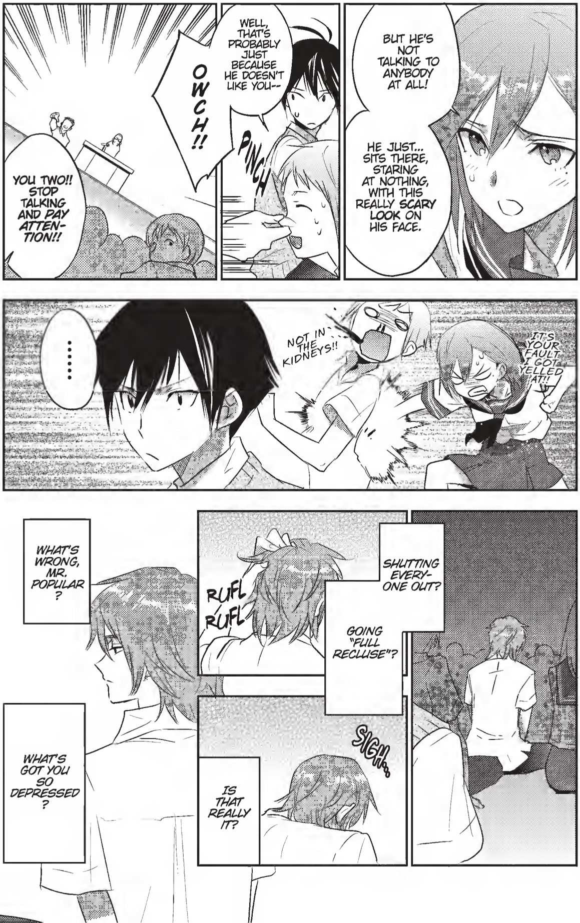

UM... H-HOW ABOUT FOR NOW, WE START WITH WALKING?!
TO SCHOOL!
NOD NOD
WSH!!
ぱっ
AAAAA-AHHH!!
WHAT'S WRONG?!
I FORGOT *HOW* TO WALK!!
?!
CALM DOWN! PUT ONE FOOT IN FRONT OF THE OTHER.
LEFT, THEN RIGHT. LEFT, THEN RIGHT.
AAAUGH!!
はわわわ
H-HOW DO LEGS MOVE AGAIN?
WHICH ONE IS THE **RIGHT** ONE? OR THE ***LEFT***?!
QUIVER
QUIVER
WHAT?! ***YIKES!*** DON'T YOU THINK THIS IS A LITTLE *TOO* *MUCH*?
YO, HOTAKA!
G'MORNING! WHAT'CHA UP TO?!

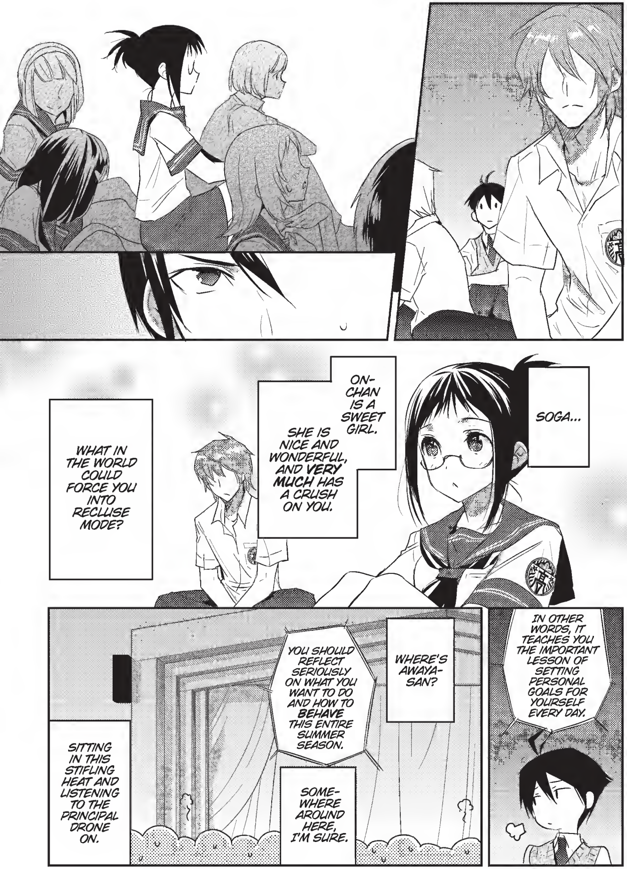

HMPH!
!
!!
?
ZWIP

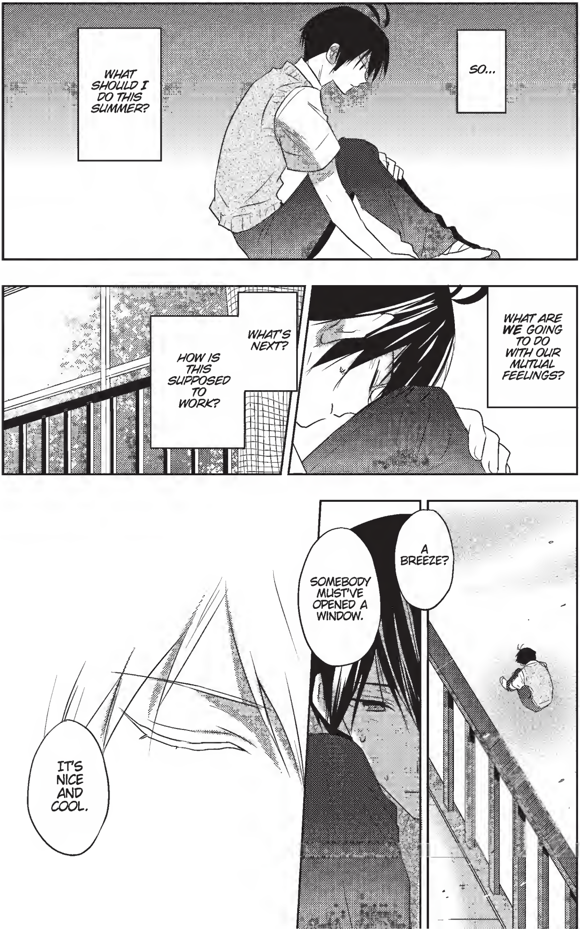

THERE!! SO HA!!
GRAWR!
くわっ
DASH
WHRL

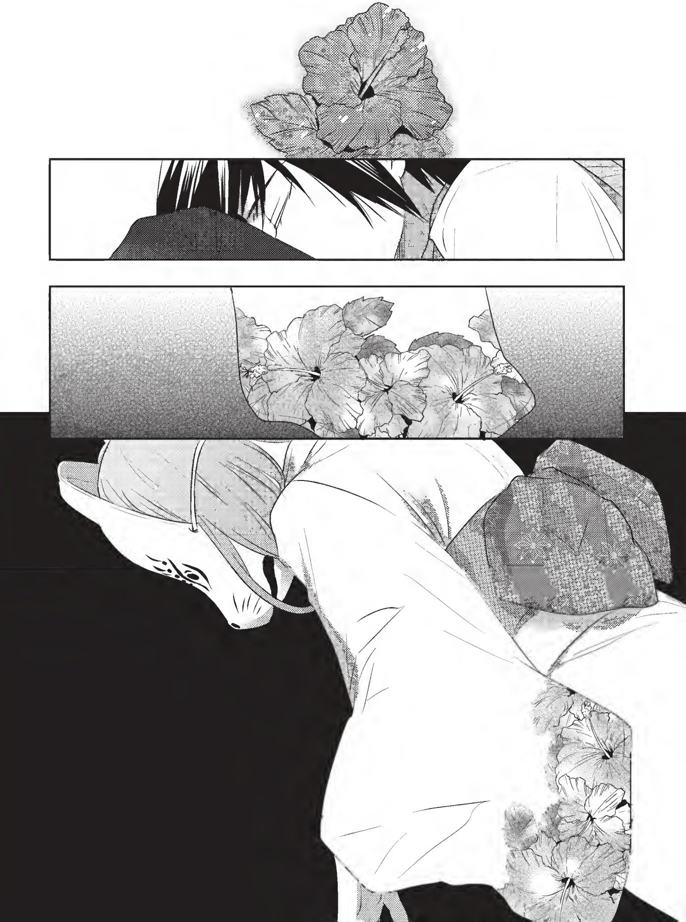

ACCORDINGLY...
BEHAVE YOURSELVES PROPERLY ACROSS THE SUMMER WEEKS...
SO HOT...
HUFF
HUFF
WITH THE DIGNITY AND MANNERS **BEFITTING** STUDENTS FROM THIS INSTITUTION.
HUFF
IS HE TRYING TO KILL US?
HUFF
EACH AND EVERY ONE OF YOU MUST REMEMBER TO MAINTAIN **GOOD HABITS** AND A **HEALTHY LIFESTYLE.**
STEAM
むわっ
DID THEY REALLY HAVE TO GATHER THE ENTIRE STUDENT BODY INTO THIS STUFFY AUDITORIUM RIGHT BEFORE SUMMER VACATION...?
GOD, THIS PLACE IS A **SAUNA!**
GONNA KEEL OVER DEAD ANY MINUTE NOW.
SHF

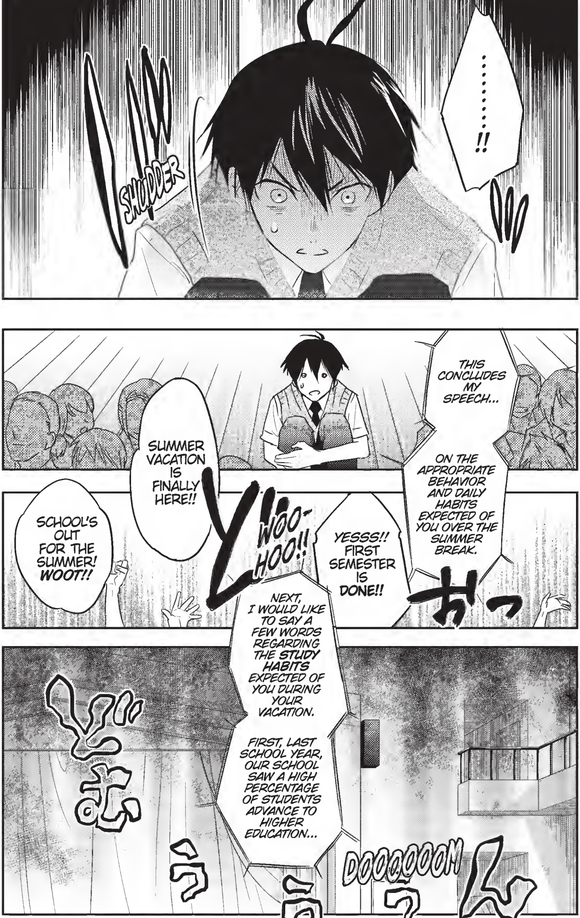

OOF !!
STOMP
OW!
SUGOU? DID YOU JUST KICK ME?
IT'S SOGA.
HE'S BEEN ACTING WEIRD ALL DAY.
YEAH, HE JUST GETS LIKE THAT SOMETIMES.
FOR SOME REASON, THAT ONLY HE KNOWS, HE'LL JUST SUDDENLY GO FULL RECLUSE ON US...
AND SHUT EVERY-ONE OUT.
I MEAN, WE'VE TRIED ASKING HIM ABOUT IT...
BUT EVEN IF WE JUST ASK IF HE'S OKAY, HE DOESN'T SAY A WORD.
THE ONLY THING WE CAN REALLY DO IS SIT BACK AND WAIT FOR HIM TO COME OUT OF IT.

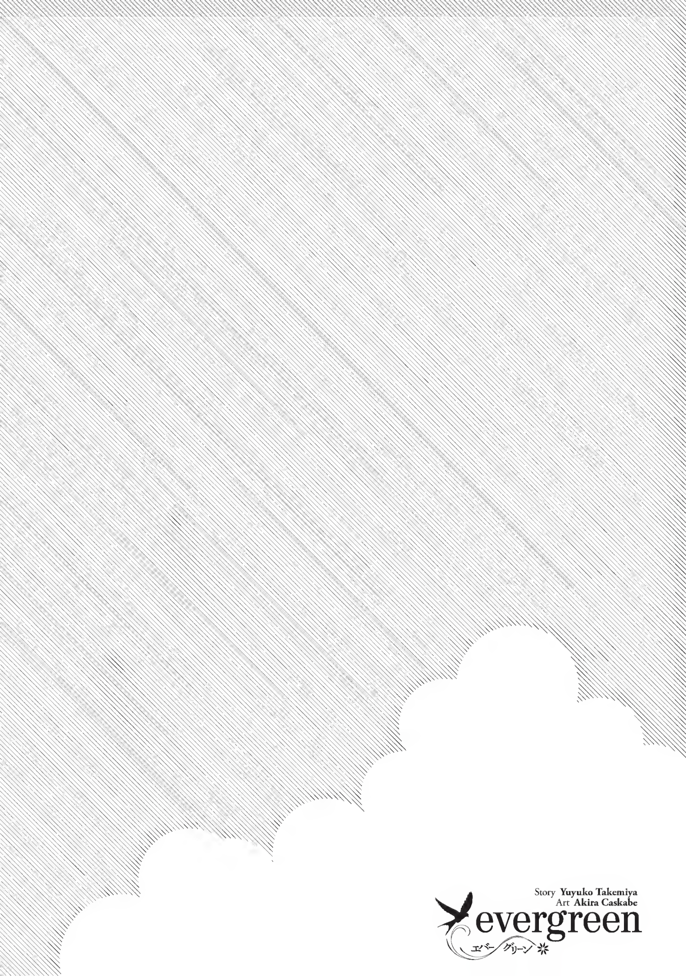

BUT HE'S NOT TALKING TO ANYBODY AT ALL!
HE JUST... SITS THERE, STARING AT NOTHING, WITH THIS REALLY SCARY LOOK ON HIS FACE.
WELL, THAT'S PROBABLY JUST BECAUSE HE DOESN'T LIKE YOU--
PINCH
OWCH!!
YOU TWO!! STOP TALKING AND PAY ATTENTION!!
IT'S YOUR FAULT I GOT YELLED AT!!
NOT IN THE KIDNEYS!!
......
SHUTTING EVERYONE OUT?
GOING "FULL RECLUSE"?
RUFL RUFL
WHAT'S WRONG, MR. POPULAR?
SIGH...
IS THAT REALLY IT?
WHAT'S GOT YOU SO DEPRESSED?


SOGA...
ON-CHAN IS A SWEET GIRL.
SHE IS NICE AND WONDERFUL, AND **VERY MUCH** HAS A CRUSH ON YOU.
WHAT IN THE WORLD COULD FORCE YOU INTO RECLUSE MODE?
IN OTHER WORDS, IT TEACHES YOU THE IMPORTANT LESSON OF SETTING PERSONAL GOALS FOR YOURSELF EVERY DAY.
WHERE'S AWAYA-SAN?
YOU SHOULD REFLECT SERIOUSLY ON WHAT YOU WANT TO DO AND HOW TO **BEHAVE** THIS ENTIRE SUMMER SEASON.
SOMEWHERE AROUND HERE, I'M SURE.
SITTING IN THIS STIFLING HEAT AND LISTENING TO THE PRINCIPAL DRONE ON.


SO...
WHAT SHOULD I DO THIS SUMMER?
WHAT ARE **WE** GOING TO DO WITH OUR MUTUAL FEELINGS?
WHAT'S NEXT?
HOW IS THIS SUPPOSED TO WORK?
A BREEZE?
SOMEBODY MUST'VE OPENED A WINDOW.
IT'S NICE AND COOL.




......!!
SHUDDER
THIS CONCLUDES MY SPEECH...
ON THE APPROPRIATE BEHAVIOR AND DAILY HABITS EXPECTED OF YOU OVER THE SUMMER BREAK.
SUMMER VACATION IS FINALLY HERE!!
おっ
YESSS!! FIRST SEMESTER IS DONE!!
WOO-HOO!!
SCHOOL'S OUT FOR THE SUMMER! WOOT!!
NEXT, I WOULD LIKE TO SAY A FEW WORDS REGARDING THE STUDY HABITS EXPECTED OF YOU DURING YOUR VACATION.
FIRST, LAST SCHOOL YEAR, OUR SCHOOL SAW A HIGH PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS ADVANCE TO HIGHER EDUCATION...
どむううぅん
DOOOOOOM



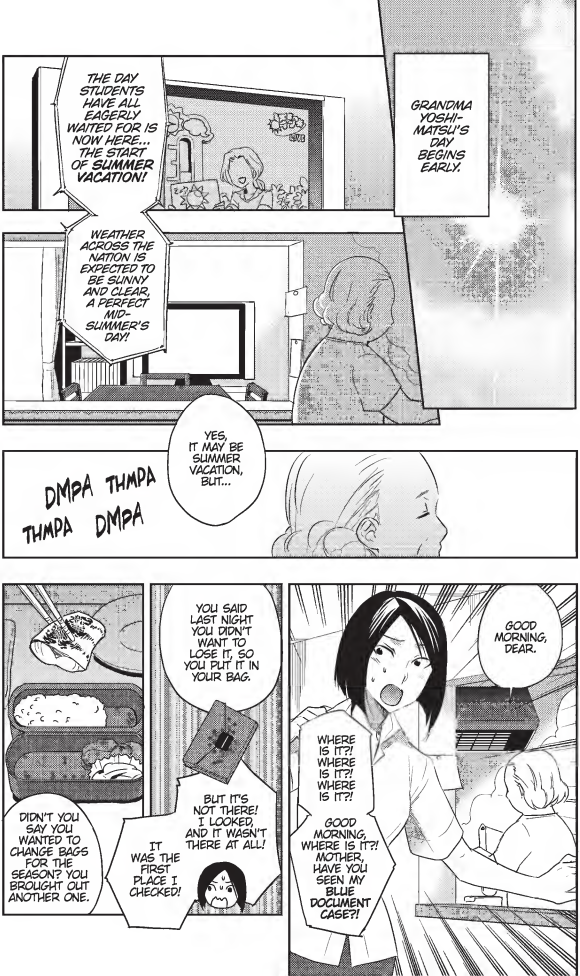
Story **Yuyuko Takemiya**
Art **Akira Caskabe**

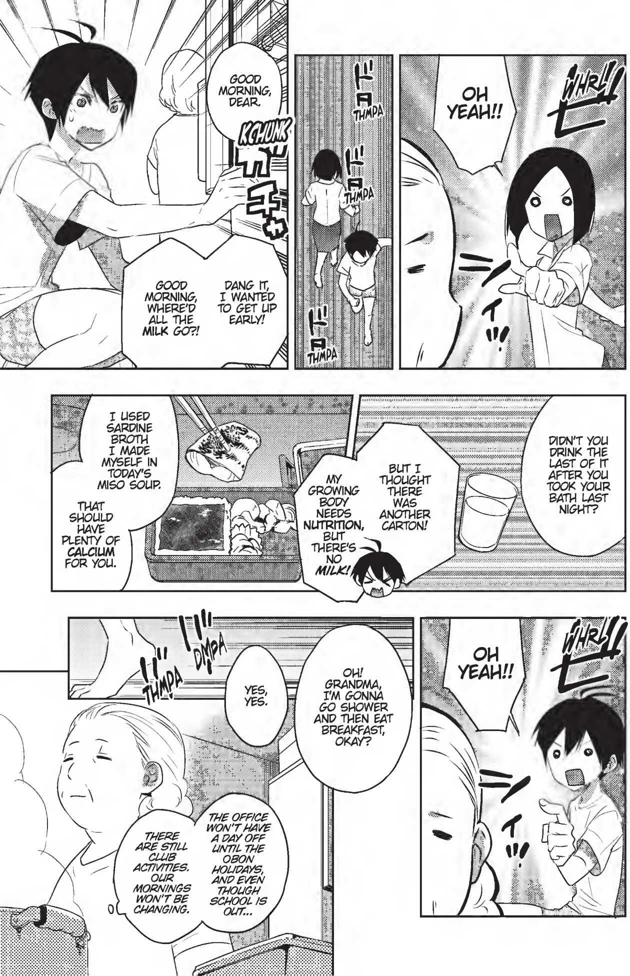
evergreen

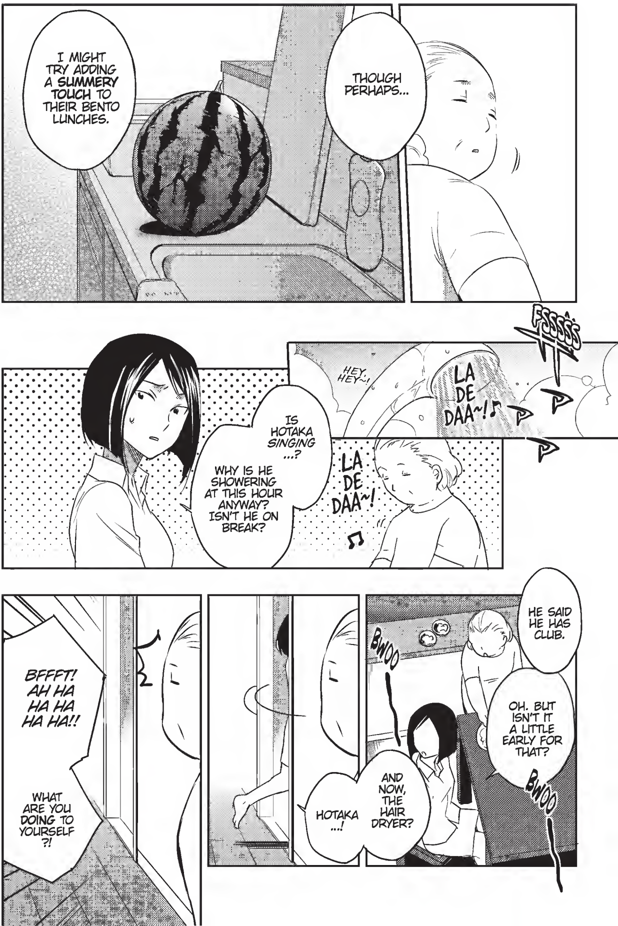
エバーグリーン

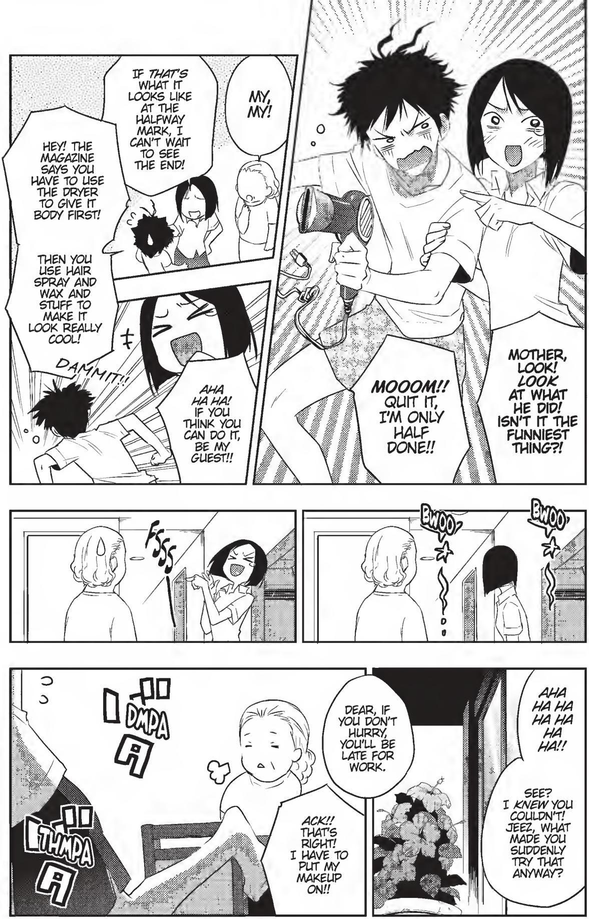
♫
NEW CELLPHONE WALLPAPER!
♪

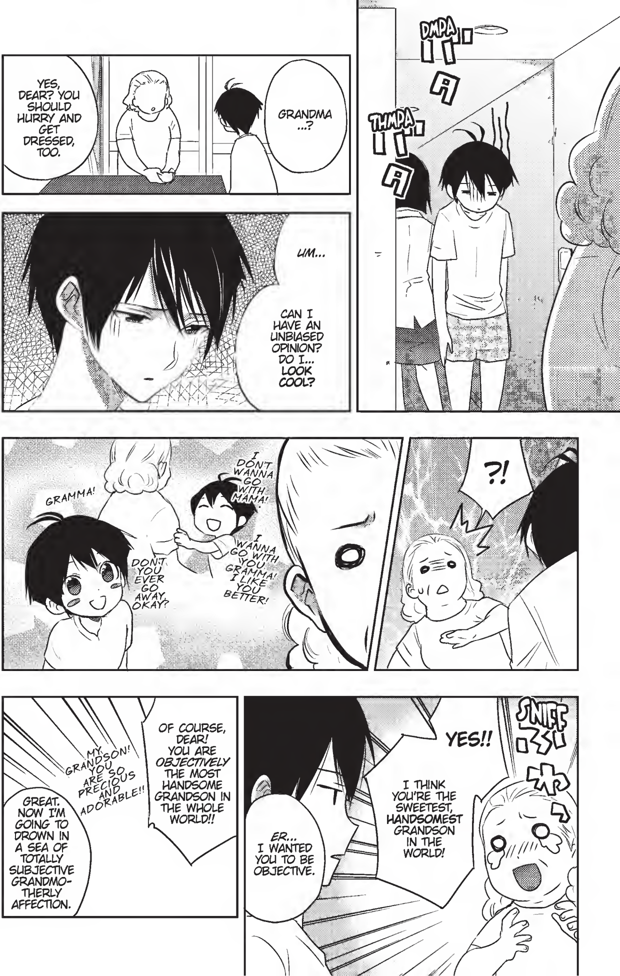
Chapter 13: Sun & Rain

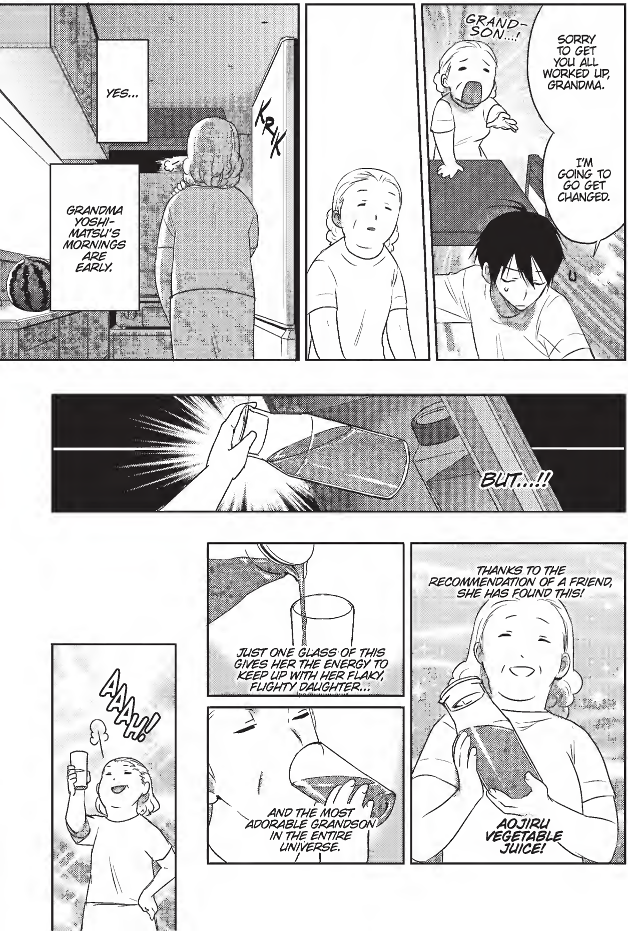

GRANDMA YOSHIMATSU'S DAY BEGINS EARLY.
THE DAY STUDENTS HAVE ALL EAGERLY WAITED FOR IS NOW HERE... THE START OF **SUMMER VACATION!**
WEATHER ACROSS THE NATION IS EXPECTED TO BE SUNNY AND CLEAR, A PERFECT MIDSUMMER'S DAY!
YES, IT MAY BE SUMMER VACATION, BUT...
DMPA THMPA THMPA DMPA
GOOD MORNING, DEAR.
WHERE IS IT?! WHERE IS IT?! WHERE IS IT?!
GOOD MORNING, WHERE IS IT?! MOTHER, HAVE YOU SEEN MY **BLUE DOCUMENT CASE?!**
YOU SAID LAST NIGHT YOU DIDN'T WANT TO LOSE IT, SO YOU PUT IT IN YOUR BAG.
BUT IT'S NOT THERE! I LOOKED, AND IT WASN'T THERE AT ALL!
IT WAS THE FIRST PLACE I CHECKED!
DIDN'T YOU SAY YOU WANTED TO CHANGE BAGS FOR THE SEASON? YOU BROUGHT OUT ANOTHER ONE.

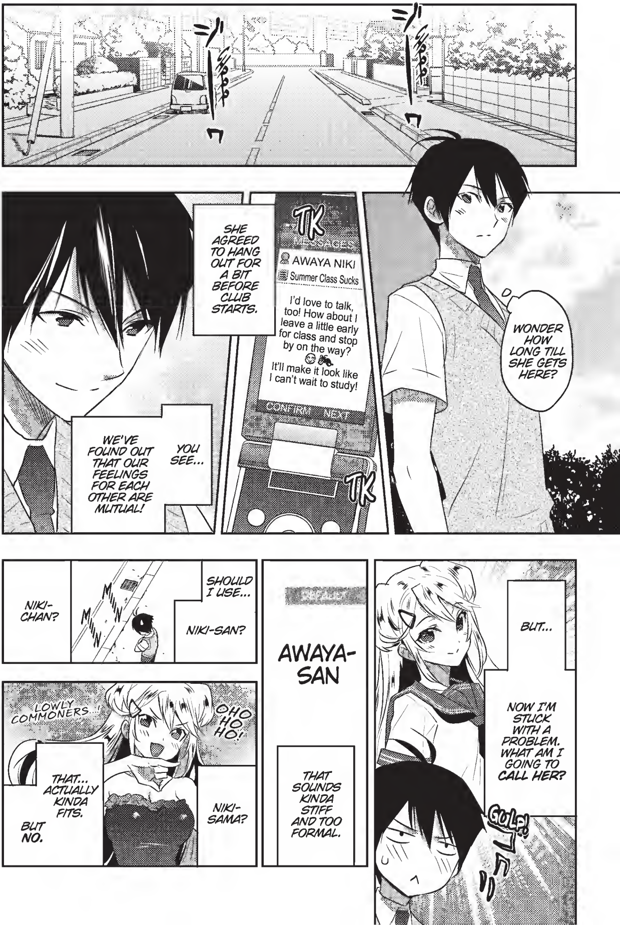

WHRL!!
OH YEAH!!
ドタ THMPA
ドタ THMPA
ドタ THMPA
GOOD MORNING, DEAR.
KCHUNK
DANG IT, I WANTED TO GET UP EARLY!
GOOD MORNING, WHERE'D ALL THE MILK GO?!
DIDN'T YOU DRINK THE LAST OF IT AFTER YOU TOOK YOUR BATH LAST NIGHT?
BUT I THOUGHT THERE WAS ANOTHER CARTON!
MY GROWING BODY NEEDS NUTRITION, BUT THERE'S NO MILK!
I USED SARDINE BROTH I MADE MYSELF IN TODAY'S MISO SOUP.
THAT SHOULD HAVE PLENTY OF CALCIUM FOR YOU.
WHRL!!
OH YEAH!!
OH! GRANDMA, I'M GONNA GO SHOWER AND THEN EAT BREAKFAST, OKAY?
YES, YES.
DMPA
THMPA
THE OFFICE WON'T HAVE A DAY OFF UNTIL THE OBON HOLIDAYS, AND EVEN THOUGH SCHOOL IS OUT...
THERE ARE STILL CLUB ACTIVITIES. OUR MORNINGS WON'T BE CHANGING.


THOUGH PERHAPS...
I MIGHT TRY ADDING A SUMMERY TOUCH TO THEIR BENTO LUNCHES.
FSSSSS
HEY, HEY~!
LA DE DAA~!♪
LA DE DAA~!
♫
IS HOTAKA SINGING ...?
WHY IS HE SHOWERING AT THIS HOUR ANYWAY? ISN'T HE ON BREAK?
HE SAID HE HAS CLUB.
BWOO
OH. BUT ISN'T IT A LITTLE EARLY FOR THAT?
BWOO
AND NOW, THE HAIR DRYER?
HOTAKA ...!
BFFFT! AH HA HA HA HA HA!!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING TO YOURSELF?!

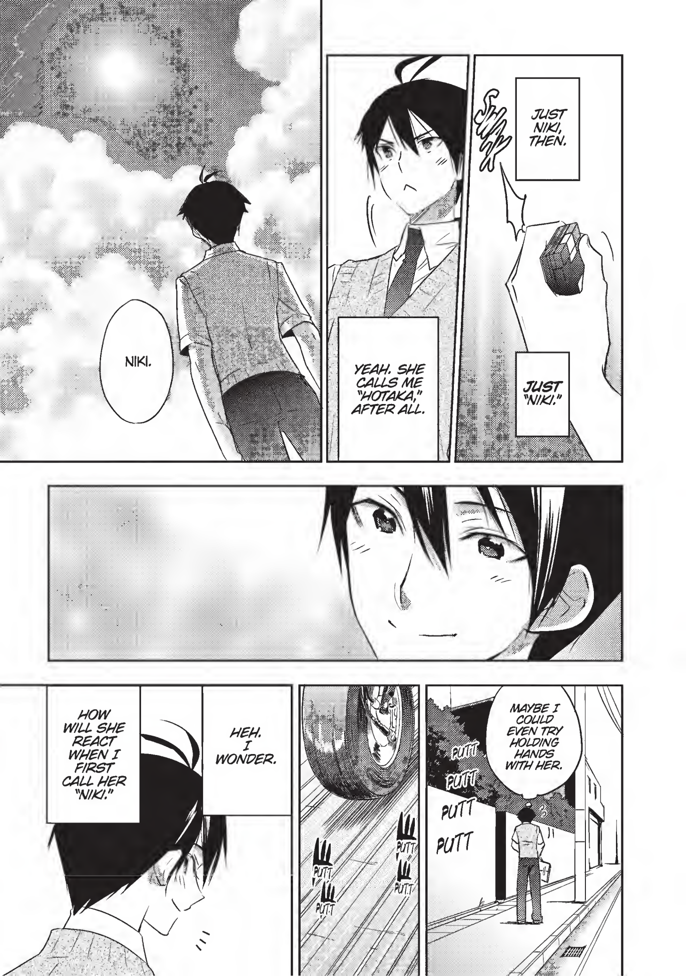

MOTHER, LOOK! LOOK AT WHAT HE DID! ISN'T IT THE FUNNIEST THING?!
MOOOM!! QUIT IT, I'M ONLY HALF DONE!!
MY, MY!
IF THAT'S WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE AT THE HALFWAY MARK, I CAN'T WAIT TO SEE THE END!
HEY! THE MAGAZINE SAYS YOU HAVE TO USE THE DRYER TO GIVE IT BODY FIRST!
THEN YOU USE HAIR SPRAY AND WAX AND STUFF TO MAKE IT LOOK REALLY COOL!
AHA HA HA! IF YOU THINK YOU CAN DO IT, BE MY GUEST!!
DAMMIT!!
BWOO
BWOO
FSSS
AHA HA HA HA HA HA HA!!
SEE? I KNEW YOU COULDN'T! JEEZ, WHAT MADE YOU SUDDENLY TRY THAT ANYWAY?
DEAR, IF YOU DON'T HURRY, YOU'LL BE LATE FOR WORK.
ACK!! THAT'S RIGHT! I HAVE TO PUT MY MAKEUP ON!!
DMPA
THMPA

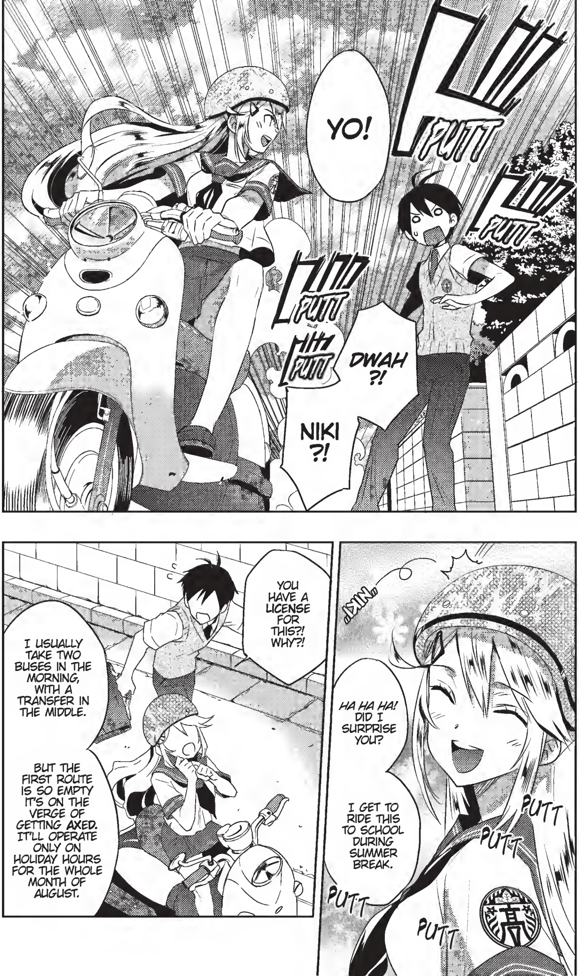

DMPA
THMPA
GRANDMA ...?
YES, DEAR? YOU SHOULD HURRY AND GET DRESSED, TOO.
UM...
CAN I HAVE AN UNBIASED OPINION? DO I... LOOK COOL?
?!
I DON'T WANNA GO WITH MAMA!
GRAMMA!
I WANNA GO WITH YOU GRAMMA! I LIKE YOU BETTER!
DON'T YOU EVER GO AWAY, OKAY?
SNIFF
YES!!
I THINK YOU'RE THE SWEETEST, HANDSOMEST GRANDSON IN THE WORLD!
ER... I WANTED YOU TO BE OBJECTIVE.
OF COURSE, DEAR! YOU ARE OBJECTIVELY THE MOST HANDSOME GRANDSON IN THE WHOLE WORLD!!
MY GRANDSON! YOU ARE SO PRECIOUS AND ADORABLE!!
GREAT. NOW I'M GOING TO DROWN IN A SEA OF TOTALLY SUBJECTIVE GRANDMOTHERLY AFFECTION.

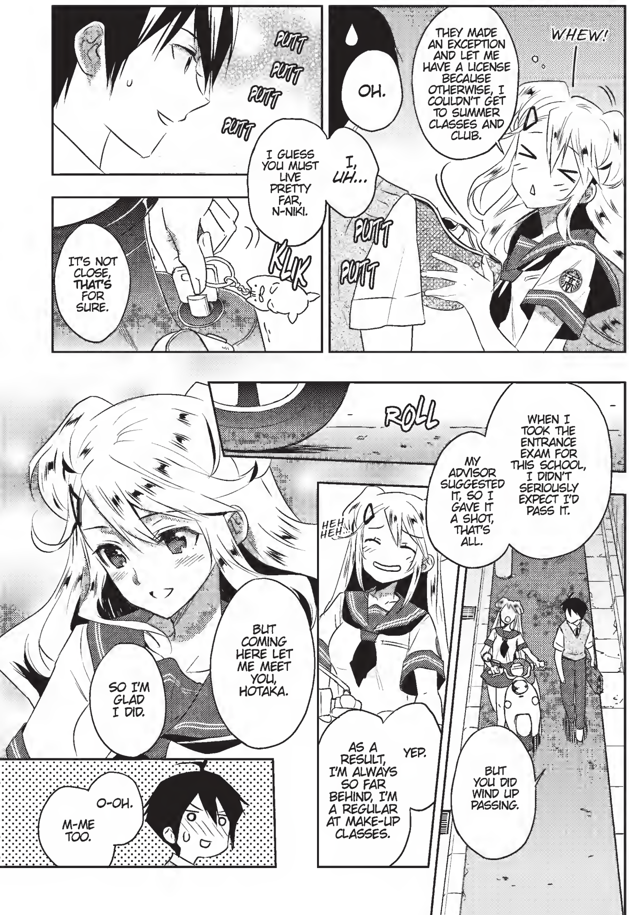

GRANDSON...!
SORRY TO GET YOU ALL WORKED UP, GRANDMA.
I'M GOING TO GO GET CHANGED.
YES...
KRIK
GRANDMA YOSHIMATSU'S MORNINGS ARE EARLY.
BUT...!!
THANKS TO THE RECOMMENDATION OF A FRIEND, SHE HAS FOUND THIS!
AOJIRU VEGETABLE JUICE!
JUST ONE GLASS OF THIS GIVES HER THE ENERGY TO KEEP UP WITH HER FLAKY, FLIGHTY DAUGHTER...
AND THE MOST ADORABLE GRANDSON IN THE ENTIRE UNIVERSE.
AAAH!

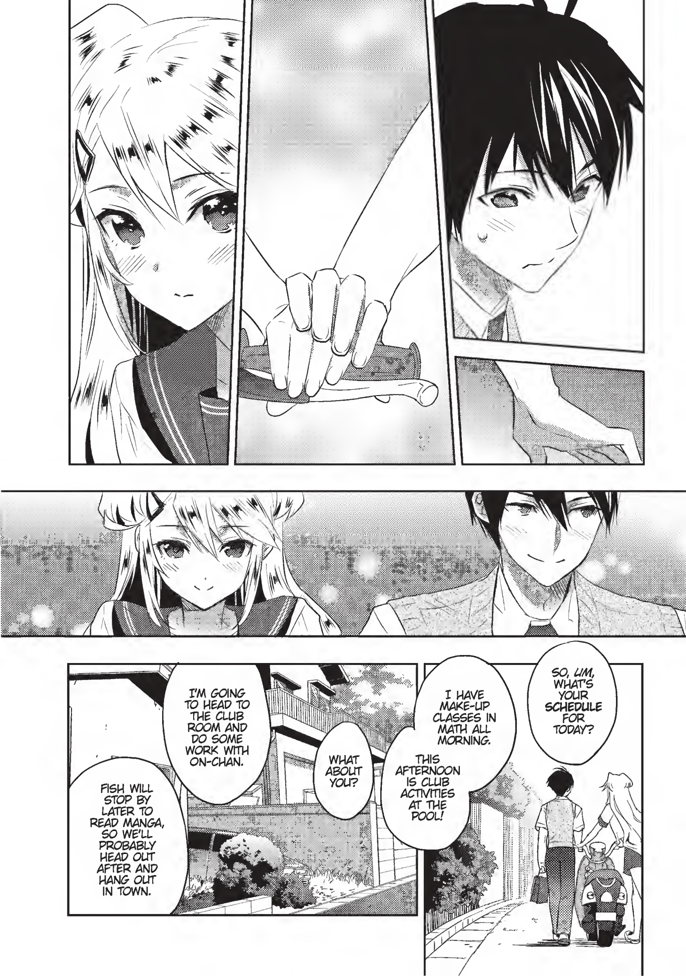

SHAAA
SHAAA
WONDER HOW LONG TILL SHE GETS HERE?
TK
MESSAGES
AWAYA NIKI
Summer Class Sucks
CONFIRM
NEXT
TK
SHE AGREED TO HANG OUT FOR A BIT BEFORE CLUB STARTS.
YOU SEE...
WE'VE FOUND OUT THAT OUR FEELINGS FOR EACH OTHER ARE MUTUAL!
BUT...
NOW I'M STUCK WITH A PROBLEM. WHAT AM I GOING TO CALL HER?
GULP!
AWAYA-SAN
THAT SOUNDS KINDA STIFF AND TOO FORMAL.
SHOULD I USE...
NIKI-SAN?
MIN MIN
NIKI-CHAN?
NIKI-SAMA?
OHO HO HO!
LOWLY COMMONERS...!
THAT... ACTUALLY KINDA FITS.
BUT NO.

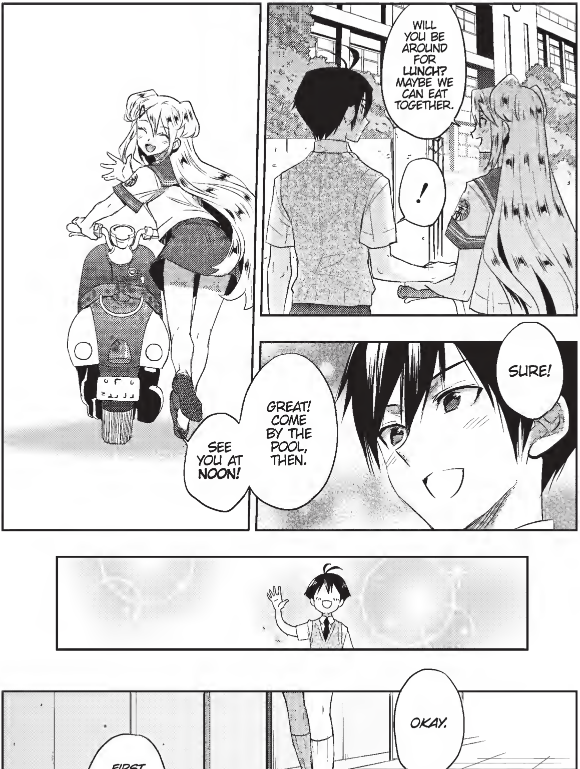
I'd love to talk, too! How about I leave a little early for class and stop by on the way?
It'll make it look like I can't wait to study!

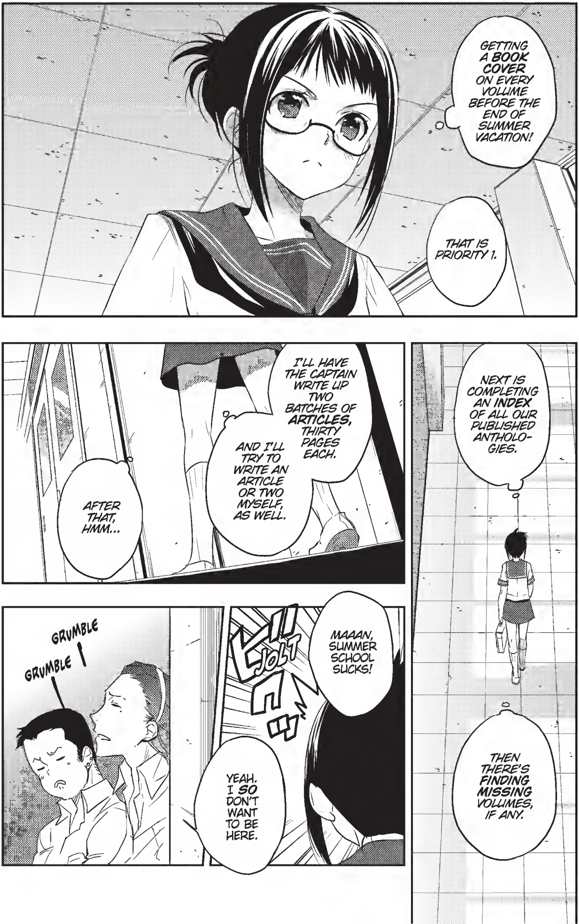

JUST NIKI, THEN.
SHAK
JUST "NIKI."
YEAH. SHE CALLS ME "HOTAKA," AFTER ALL.
NIKI.
MAYBE I COULD EVEN TRY HOLDING HANDS WITH HER.
PUTT
PUTT
PUTT
PUTT
PUTT
PUTT
PUTT
PUTT
PUTT
HEH. I WONDER.
HOW WILL SHE REACT WHEN I FIRST CALL HER "NIKI."

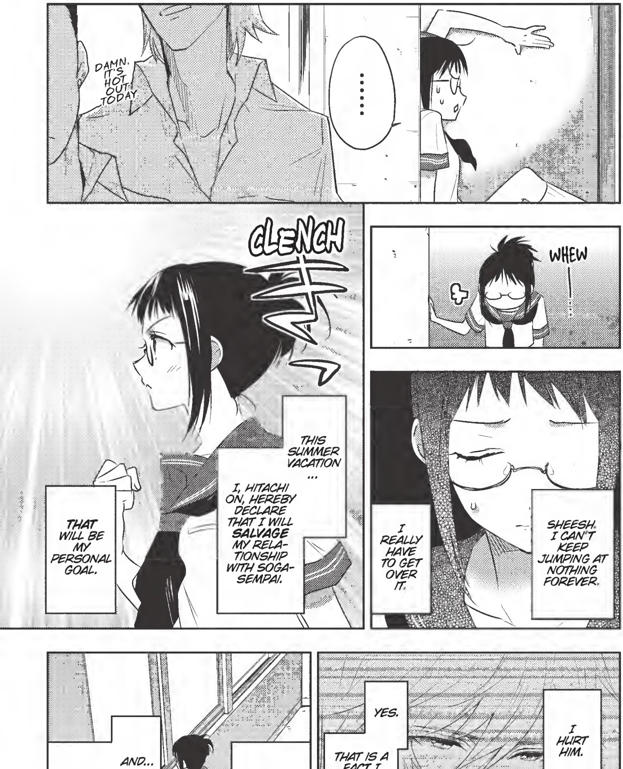

PUTT
YO!
PUTT
PUTT
PUTT
DWAH?!
NIKI?!
NIKI
HA HA HA! DID I SURPRISE YOU?
I GET TO RIDE THIS TO SCHOOL DURING SUMMER BREAK.
PUTT
PUTT
PUTT
PUTT
YOU HAVE A LICENSE FOR THIS?! WHY?!
I USUALLY TAKE TWO BUSES IN THE MORNING, WITH A TRANSFER IN THE MIDDLE.
BUT THE FIRST ROUTE IS SO EMPTY IT'S ON THE VERGE OF GETTING **AXED**. IT'LL OPERATE ONLY ON HOLIDAY HOURS FOR THE WHOLE MONTH OF AUGUST.

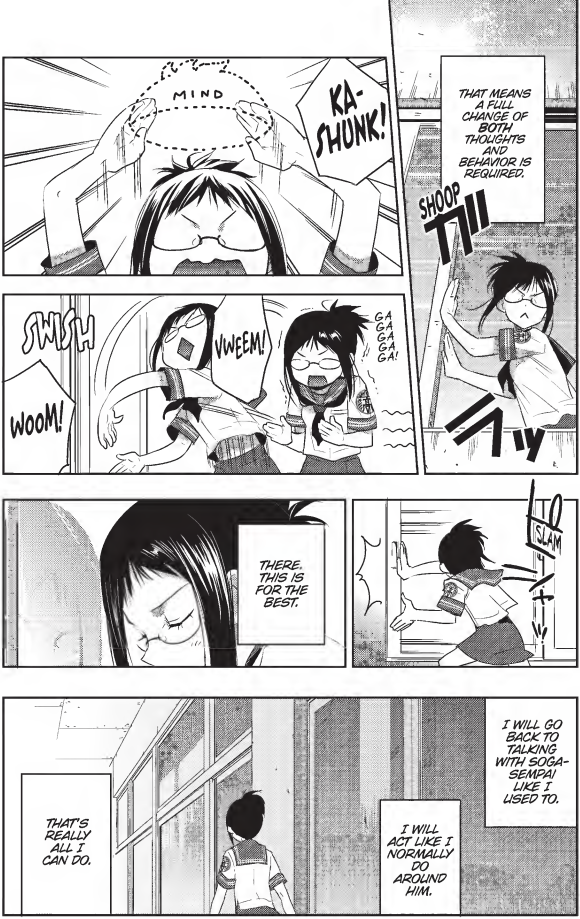

WHEW!
THEY MADE AN EXCEPTION AND LET ME HAVE A LICENSE BECAUSE OTHERWISE, I COULDN'T GET TO SUMMER CLASSES AND CLUB.
OH.
I, UH...
PUTT PUTT
PUTT PUTT PUTT PUTT
I GUESS YOU MUST LIVE PRETTY FAR, N-NIKI.
KLIK
IT'S NOT CLOSE, THAT'S FOR SURE.
ROLL
WHEN I TOOK THE ENTRANCE EXAM FOR THIS SCHOOL, I DIDN'T SERIOUSLY EXPECT I'D PASS IT.
MY ADVISOR SUGGESTED IT, SO I GAVE IT A SHOT, THAT'S ALL.
BUT YOU DID WIND UP PASSING.
HEH HEH...
YEP.
AS A RESULT, I'M ALWAYS SO FAR BEHIND, I'M A REGULAR AT MAKE-UP CLASSES.
BUT COMING HERE LET ME MEET YOU, HOTAKA.
SO I'M GLAD I DID.
O-OH.
M-ME TOO.

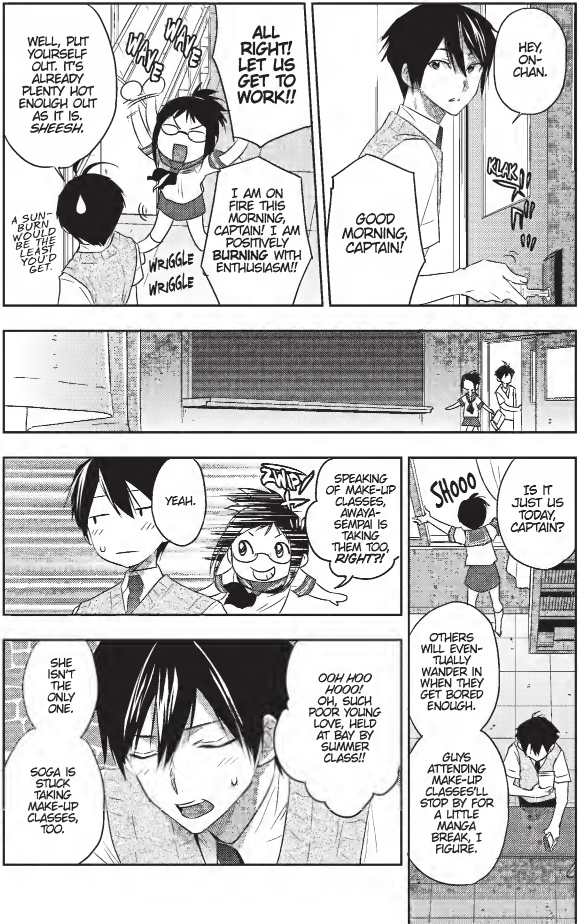

SO, UM, WHAT'S YOUR SCHEDULE FOR TODAY?
I HAVE MAKE-UP CLASSES IN MATH ALL MORNING.
THIS AFTERNOON IS CLUB ACTIVITIES AT THE POOL!
WHAT ABOUT YOU?
I'M GOING TO HEAD TO THE CLUB ROOM AND DO SOME WORK WITH ON-CHAN.
FISH WILL STOP BY LATER TO READ MANGA, SO WE'LL PROBABLY HEAD OUT AFTER AND HANG OUT IN TOWN.

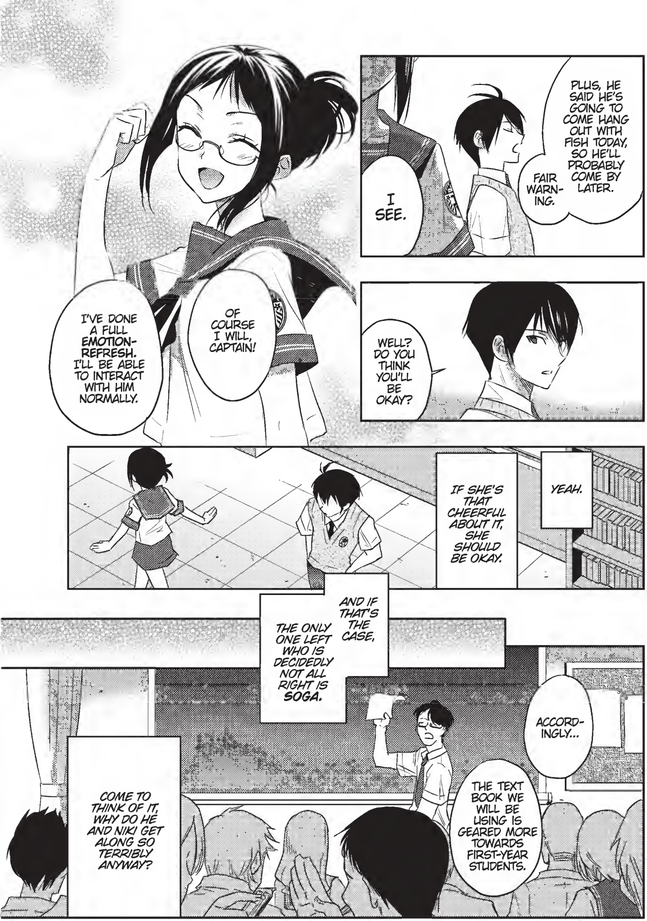

WILL YOU BE AROUND FOR LUNCH? MAYBE WE CAN EAT TOGETHER.
!
SURE!
GREAT! COME BY THE POOL, THEN.
SEE YOU AT NOON!
OKAY.
FIRST OBJECTIVE IS SETTING CLEAR, CONCRETE GOALS.

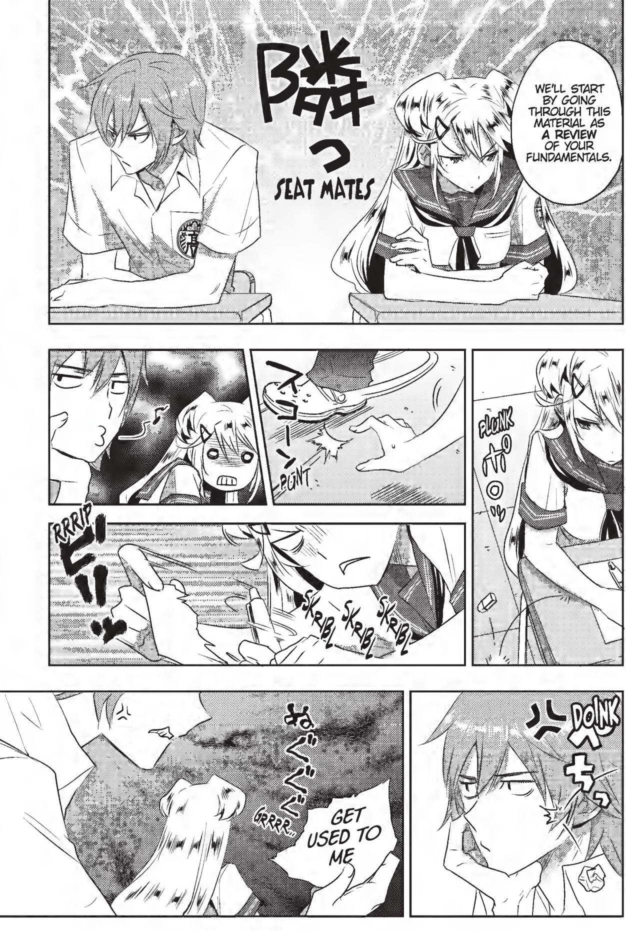

GETTING A **BOOK COVER** ON EVERY VOLUME BEFORE THE END OF SUMMER VACATION!
THAT IS PRIORITY 1.
NEXT IS COMPLETING AN **INDEX** OF ALL OUR PUBLISHED ANTHOLOGIES.
THEN THERE'S **FINDING MISSING** VOLUMES, IF ANY.
I'LL HAVE THE CAPTAIN WRITE UP TWO BATCHES OF **ARTICLES**, THIRTY PAGES EACH.
AND I'LL TRY TO WRITE AN ARTICLE OR TWO MYSELF, AS WELL.
AFTER THAT, HMM...
JOLT
MAAAN, SUMMER SCHOOL SUCKS!
YEAH. I **SO** DON'T WANT TO BE HERE.
GRUMBLE
GRUMBLE

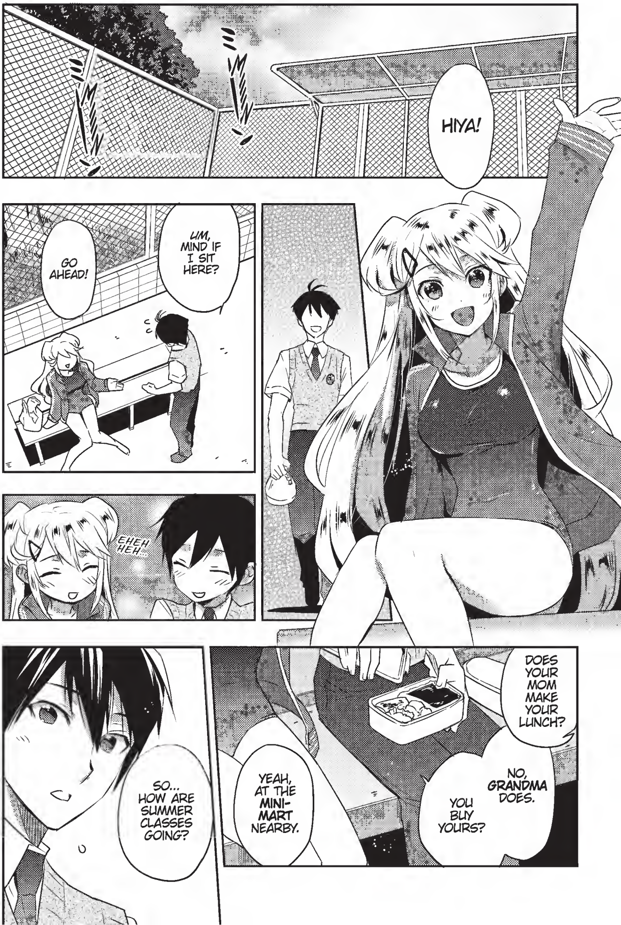

......
DAMN. IT'S HOT OUT TODAY.
WHEW
SHEESH. I CAN'T KEEP JUMPING AT NOTHING FOREVER.
I REALLY HAVE TO GET OVER IT.
CLENCH
THIS SUMMER VACATION ...
I, HITACHI ON, HEREBY DECLARE THAT I WILL SALVAGE MY RELATIONSHIP WITH SOGA-SEMPAI.
THAT WILL BE MY PERSONAL GOAL.
I HURT HIM.
YES.
THAT IS A FACT I HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO ACCEPT.
I HAVE A CRUSH ON SEMPAI.
AND...
I DON'T WANT TO HURT HIM AGAIN.

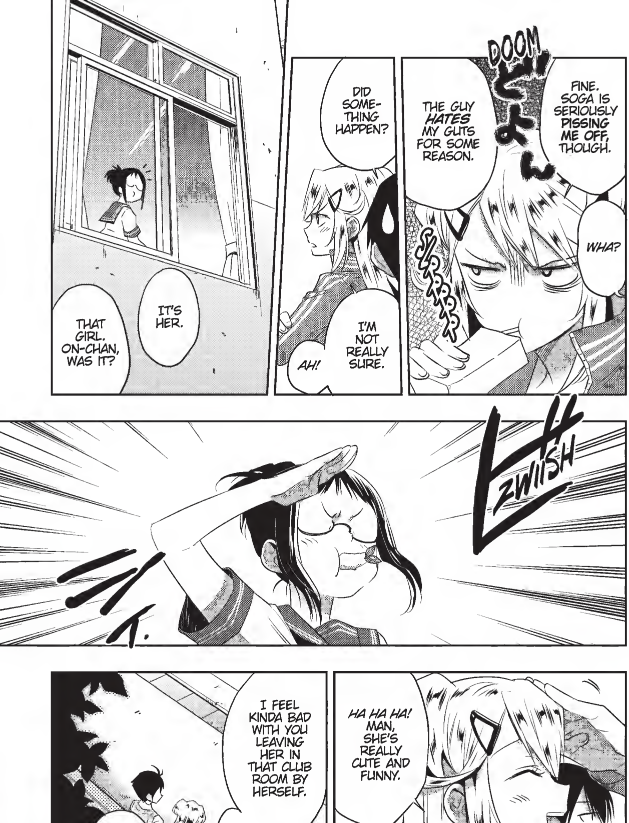

THAT MEANS A FULL CHANGE OF BOTH THOUGHTS AND BEHAVIOR IS REQUIRED.
SHOOP
KA-SHUNK!
MIND
GA GA GA GA GA!
VWEEM!
SWISH
WOOM!
ISLAM
THERE. THIS IS FOR THE BEST.
I WILL GO BACK TO TALKING WITH SOGA-SEMPAI LIKE I USED TO.
I WILL ACT LIKE I NORMALLY DO AROUND HIM.
THAT'S REALLY ALL I CAN DO.

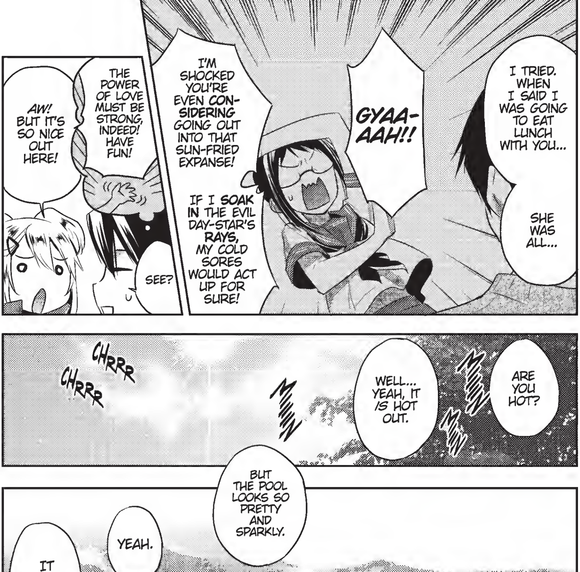

HEY, ON-CHAN.
KLAK
GOOD MORNING, CAPTAIN!
ALL RIGHT! LET US GET TO WORK!!
WAVE WAVE
WELL, PUT YOURSELF OUT. IT'S ALREADY PLENTY HOT ENOUGH OUT AS IT IS. *SHEESH.*
I AM ON FIRE THIS MORNING, CAPTAIN! I AM POSITIVELY **BURNING** WITH ENTHUSIASM!!
WRIGGLE WRIGGLE
A SUNBURN WOULD BE THE LEAST YOU'D GET.
IS IT JUST US TODAY, CAPTAIN?
SHOOO
OTHERS WILL EVENTUALLY WANDER IN WHEN THEY GET BORED ENOUGH.
GUYS ATTENDING MAKE-UP CLASSES'LL STOP BY FOR A LITTLE MANGA BREAK, I FIGURE.
SPEAKING OF MAKE-UP CLASSES, AWAYA-SEMPAI IS TAKING THEM TOO, *RIGHT?!*
ZWIP
YEAH.
OOH HOO HOOO! OH, SUCH POOR YOUNG LOVE, HELD AT BAY BY SUMMER CLASS!!
SHE ISN'T THE ONLY ONE.
SOGA IS STUCK TAKING MAKE-UP CLASSES, TOO.

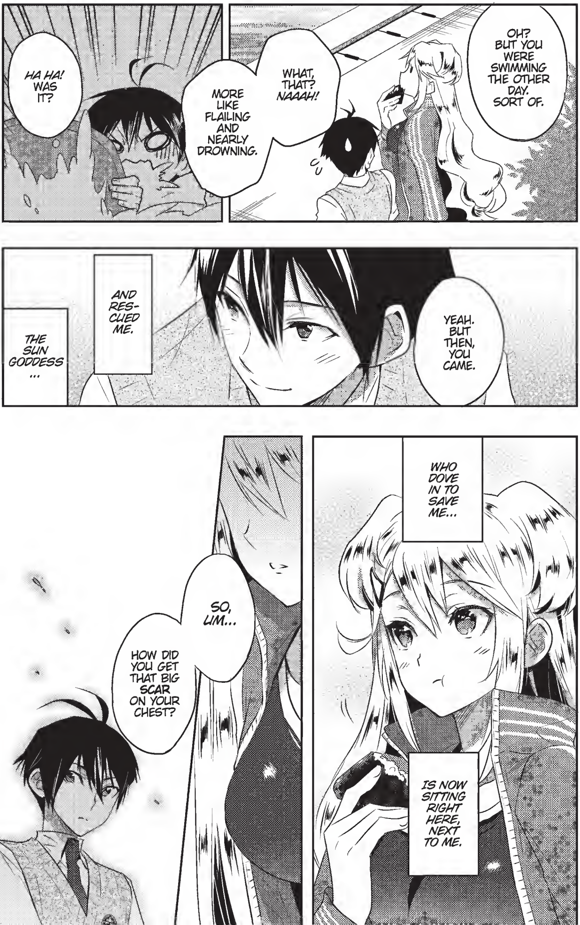

PLUS, HE SAID HE'S GOING TO COME HANG OUT WITH FISH TODAY, SO HE'LL PROBABLY COME BY LATER.
FAIR WARNING.
I SEE.
WELL? DO YOU THINK YOU'LL BE OKAY?
OF COURSE I WILL, CAPTAIN!
I'VE DONE A FULL EMOTION-REFRESH. I'LL BE ABLE TO INTERACT WITH HIM NORMALLY.
YEAH.
IF SHE'S THAT CHEERFUL ABOUT IT, SHE SHOULD BE OKAY.
AND IF THAT'S THE CASE,
THE ONLY ONE LEFT WHO IS DECIDEDLY NOT ALL RIGHT IS SOGA.
ACCORDINGLY...
THE TEXT BOOK WE WILL BE USING IS GEARED MORE TOWARDS FIRST-YEAR STUDENTS.
COME TO THINK OF IT, WHY DO HE AND NIKI GET ALONG SO TERRIBLY ANYWAY?

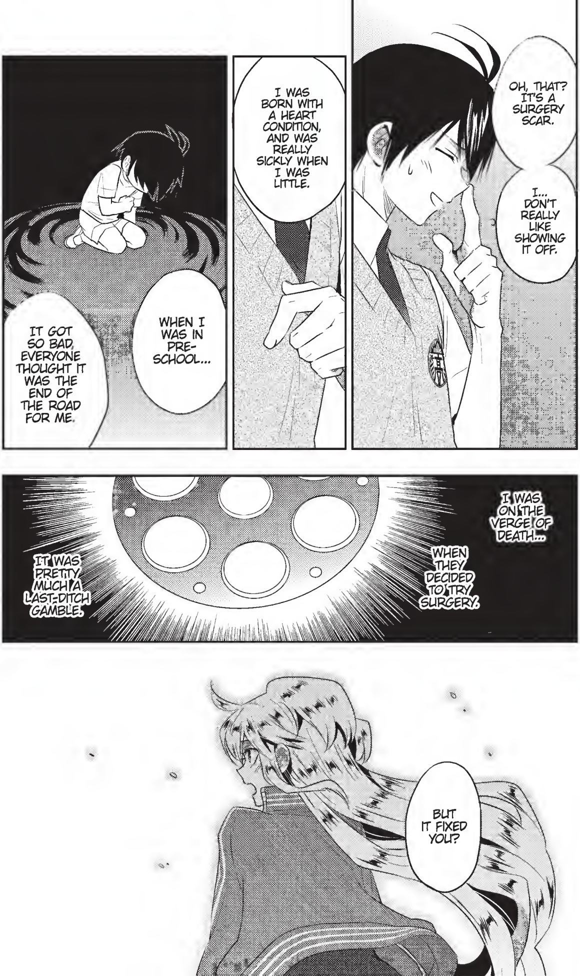

WE'LL START BY GOING THROUGH THIS MATERIAL AS A REVIEW OF YOUR FUNDAMENTALS.
隣っ
SEAT MATES
PLONK
ポロッ
スコーン
PUNT
RRRIP
ビリッ
SKRIBL
SKRIBL
SKRIBL
DOINK
べちっ
ぬぐぐぐ
GRRRR...
GET USED TO ME

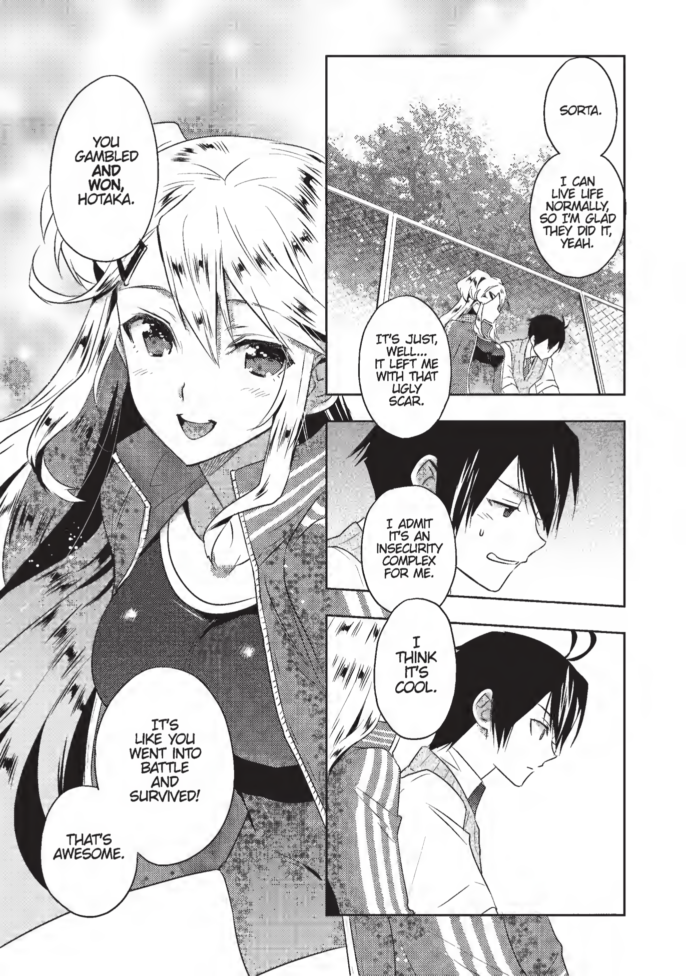

HIYA!
UM, MIND IF I SIT HERE?
GO AHEAD!
EHEH HEH...
DOES YOUR MOM MAKE YOUR LUNCH?
NO, GRANDMA DOES.
YOU BUY YOURS?
YEAH, AT THE MINI-MART NEARBY.
SO... HOW ARE SUMMER CLASSES GOING?

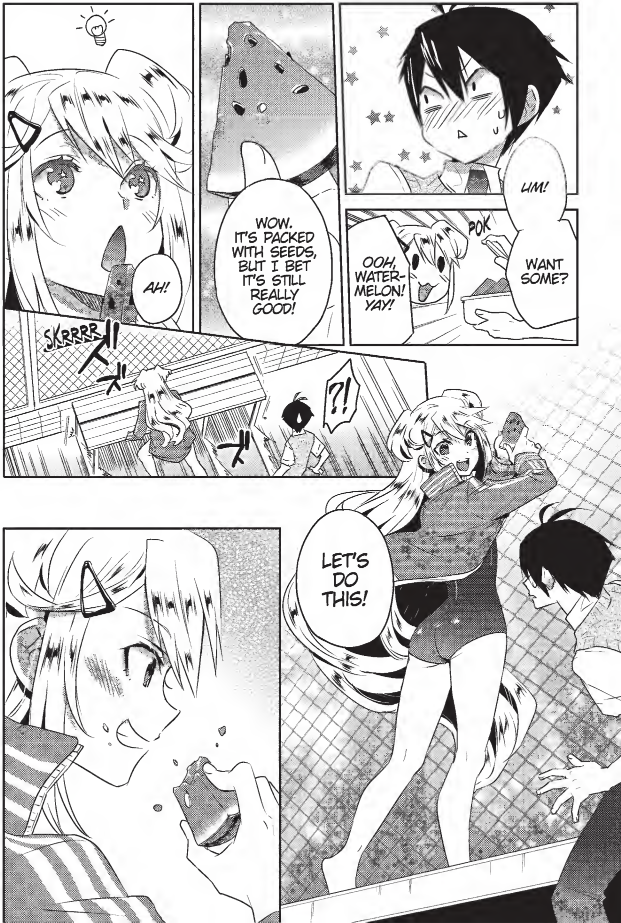

DOOM どよん
FINE. SOGA IS SERIOUSLY PISSING ME OFF, THOUGH.
SLRRRR
WHA?
THE GUY HATES MY GUTS FOR SOME REASON.
DID SOMETHING HAPPEN?
I'M NOT REALLY SURE.
AH!
IT'S HER.
THAT GIRL. ON-CHAN, WAS IT?
ZWIIISH
シィ.
HA HA HA! MAN, SHE'S REALLY CUTE AND FUNNY.
I FEEL KINDA BAD WITH YOU LEAVING HER IN THAT CLUB ROOM BY HERSELF.
SHOULD WE CALL HER DOWN?
HM? NAH.

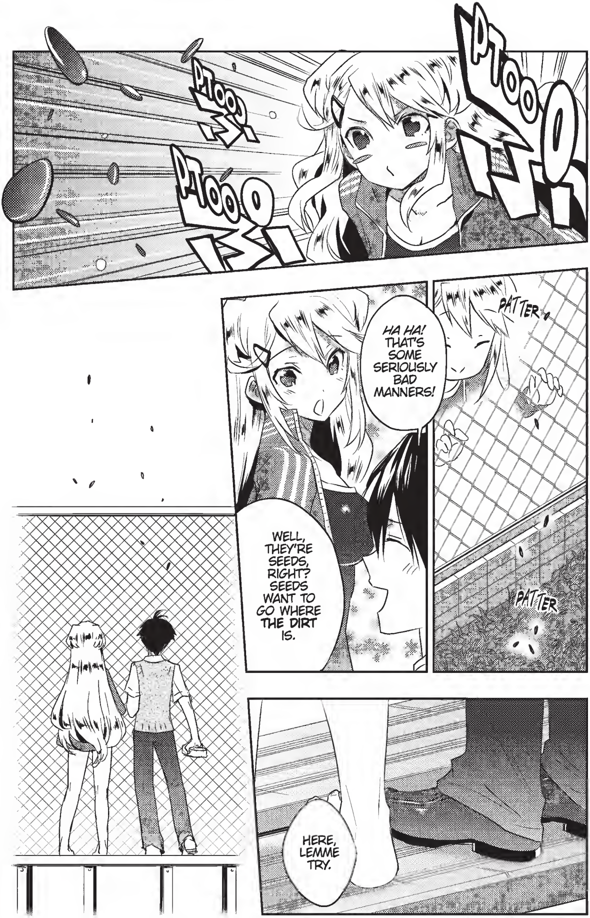

I TRIED. WHEN I SAID I WAS GOING TO EAT LUNCH WITH YOU...
SHE WAS ALL...
GYAAAAH!!
I'M SHOCKED YOU'RE EVEN **CONSIDERING** GOING OUT INTO THAT SUN-FRIED EXPANSE!
IF I **SOAK IN** THE EVIL DAY-STAR'S **RAYS,** MY COLD SORES WOULD ACT UP FOR SURE!
THE POWER OF LOVE MUST BE STRONG, INDEED! HAVE FUN!
SEE?
AW! BUT IT'S SO NICE OUT HERE!
ARE YOU HOT?
MIIN MIIN
WELL... YEAH, IT *IS* HOT OUT.
MIIN
CHRRR CHRRR
BUT THE POOL LOOKS SO PRETTY AND SPARKLY.
YEAH.
IT DOES.
OH!
THAT'S RIGHT. YOU DON'T REALLY LIKE POOLS, DO YOU?
I LIKE LOOKING AT THE WATER AND WATCHING PEOPLE SWIM.
I JUST CAN'T SWIM WORTH A DAMN MYSELF.

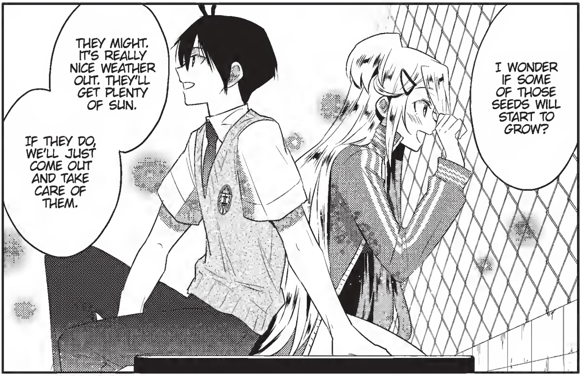

OH? BUT YOU WERE SWIMMING THE OTHER DAY. SORT OF.
WHAT, THAT? *NAAAH!*
MORE LIKE FLAILING AND NEARLY DROWNING.
HA HA! WAS IT?
YEAH. BUT THEN, YOU CAME.
AND RESCUED ME.
THE SUN GODDESS...
WHO DOVE IN TO SAVE ME...
IS NOW SITTING RIGHT HERE, NEXT TO ME.
SO, UM...
HOW DID YOU GET THAT BIG **SCAR** ON YOUR CHEST?

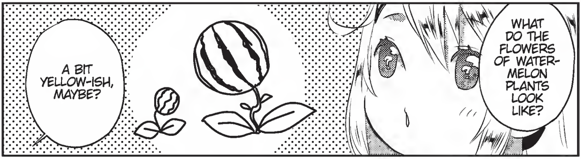

OH, THAT? IT'S A SURGERY SCAR.
I... DON'T REALLY LIKE SHOWING IT OFF.
I WAS BORN WITH A HEART CONDITION, AND WAS REALLY SICKLY WHEN I WAS LITTLE.
WHEN I WAS IN PRE-SCHOOL...
IT GOT SO BAD, EVERYONE THOUGHT IT WAS THE END OF THE ROAD FOR ME.
I WAS ON THE VERGE OF DEATH...
WHEN THEY DECIDED TO TRY SURGERY.
IT WAS PRETTY MUCH A LAST-DITCH GAMBLE.
BUT IT FIXED YOU?

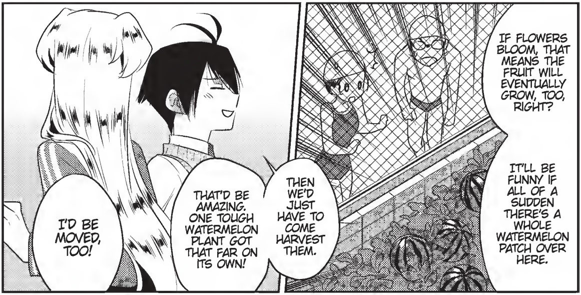

SORTA.
I CAN LIVE LIFE NORMALLY, SO I'M GLAD THEY DID IT, YEAH.
IT'S JUST, WELL... IT LEFT ME WITH THAT UGLY SCAR.
I ADMIT IT'S AN INSECURITY COMPLEX FOR ME.
I THINK IT'S COOL.
YOU GAMBLED AND WON, HOTAKA.
IT'S LIKE YOU WENT INTO BATTLE AND SURVIVED!
THAT'S AWESOME.

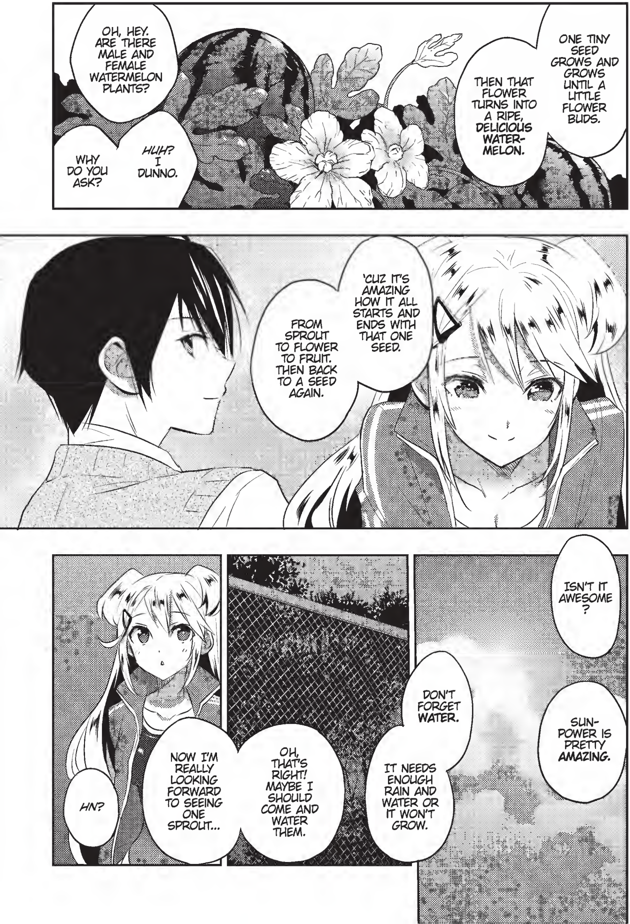

UM!
WANT SOME?
POK
OOH, WATER-MELON! YAY!
WOW. IT'S PACKED WITH SEEDS, BUT I BET IT'S STILL REALLY GOOD!
AH!
?!
SKRRRR
ズ
ズ
LET'S DO THIS!

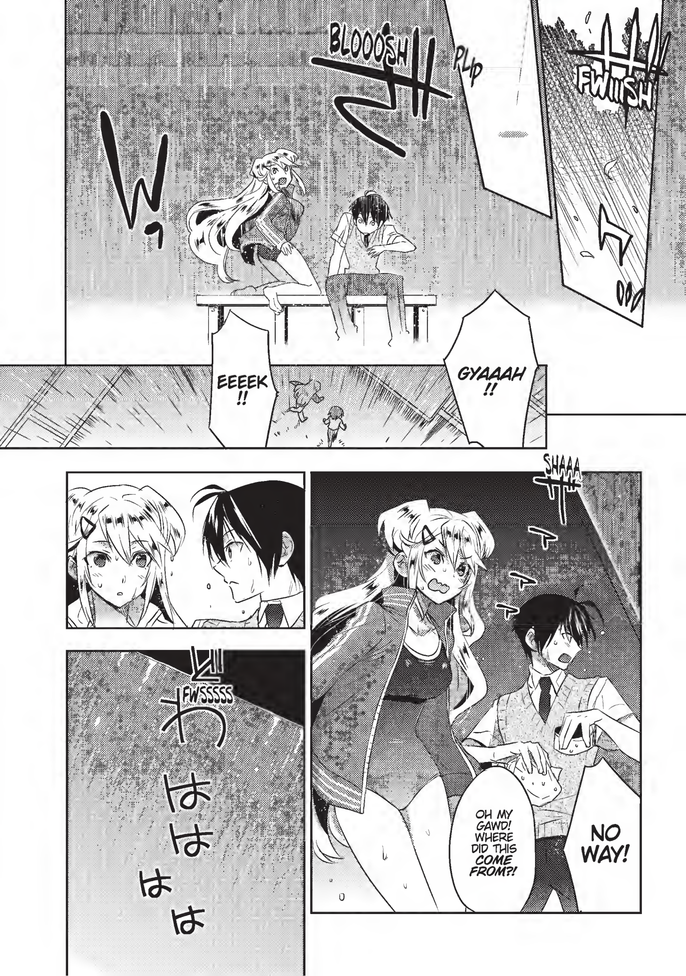

PTOOO!!
PTOO!!
PTOOO!!
PATTER
PATTER
HA HA! THAT'S SOME SERIOUSLY BAD MANNERS!
WELL, THEY'RE SEEDS, RIGHT? SEEDS WANT TO GO WHERE THE DIRT IS.
HERE, LEMME TRY.

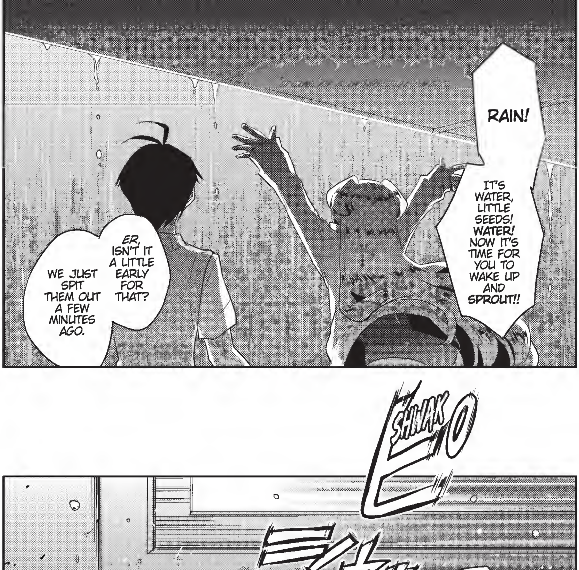

I WONDER IF SOME OF THOSE SEEDS WILL START TO GROW?
THEY MIGHT. IT'S REALLY NICE WEATHER OUT. THEY'LL GET PLENTY OF SUN.
IF THEY DO, WE'LL JUST COME OUT AND TAKE CARE OF THEM.

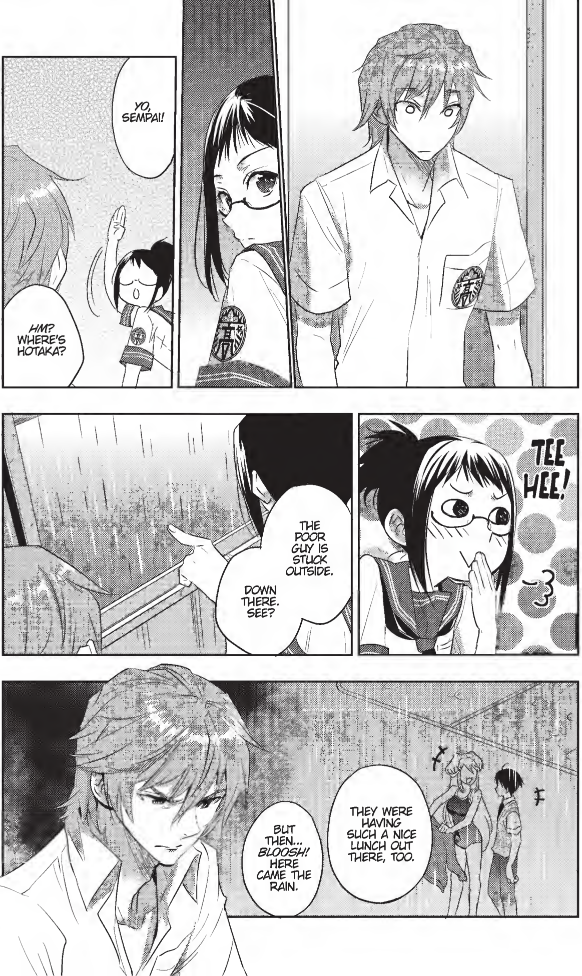

WHAT DO THE FLOWERS OF WATER-MELON PLANTS LOOK LIKE?
A BIT YELLOW-ISH, MAYBE?

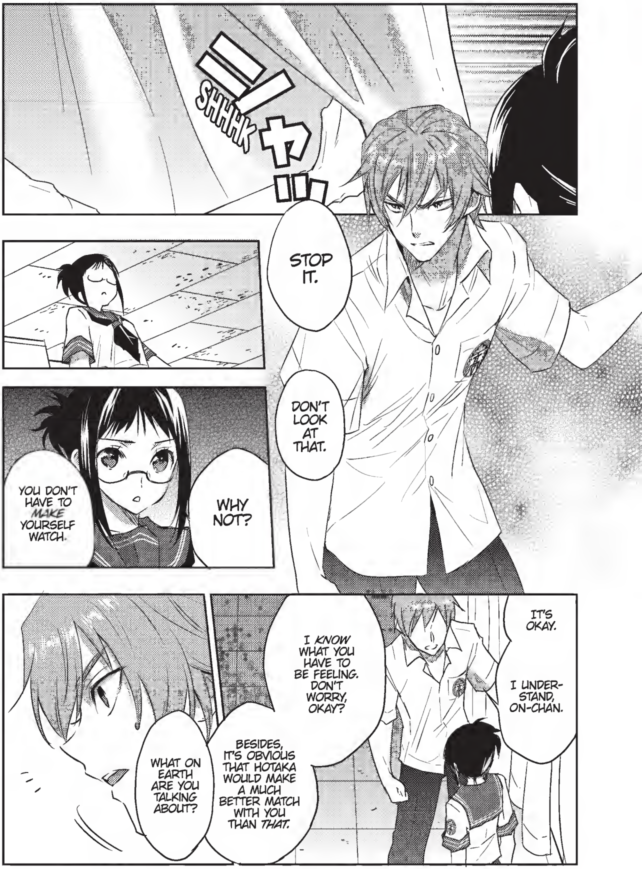

IF FLOWERS BLOOM, THAT MEANS THE FRUIT WILL EVENTUALLY GROW, TOO, RIGHT?
IT'LL BE FUNNY IF ALL OF A SUDDEN THERE'S A WHOLE WATERMELON PATCH OVER HERE.
THEN WE'D JUST HAVE TO COME HARVEST THEM.
THAT'D BE AMAZING. ONE TOUGH WATERMELON PLANT GOT THAT FAR ON ITS OWN!
I'D BE MOVED, TOO!

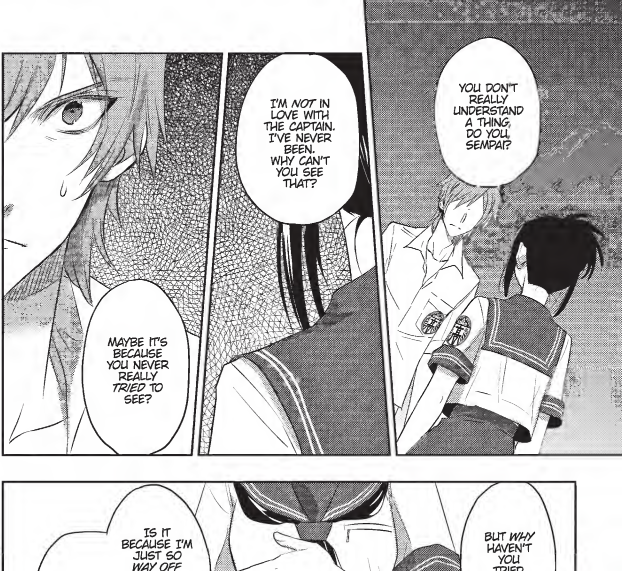

ONE TINY SEED GROWS AND GROWS UNTIL A LITTLE FLOWER BUDS.
THEN THAT FLOWER TURNS INTO A RIPE, DELICIOUS WATERMELON.
OH, HEY. ARE THERE MALE AND FEMALE WATERMELON PLANTS?
HUH? I DUNNO.
WHY DO YOU ASK?
'CUZ IT'S AMAZING HOW IT ALL STARTS AND ENDS WITH THAT ONE SEED.
FROM SPROUT TO FLOWER TO FRUIT. THEN BACK TO A SEED AGAIN.
ISN'T IT AWESOME?
SUN-POWER IS PRETTY AMAZING.
DON'T FORGET WATER.
IT NEEDS ENOUGH RAIN AND WATER OR IT WON'T GROW.
OH, THAT'S RIGHT! MAYBE I SHOULD COME AND WATER THEM.
NOW I'M REALLY LOOKING FORWARD TO SEEING ONE SPROUT...
HN?

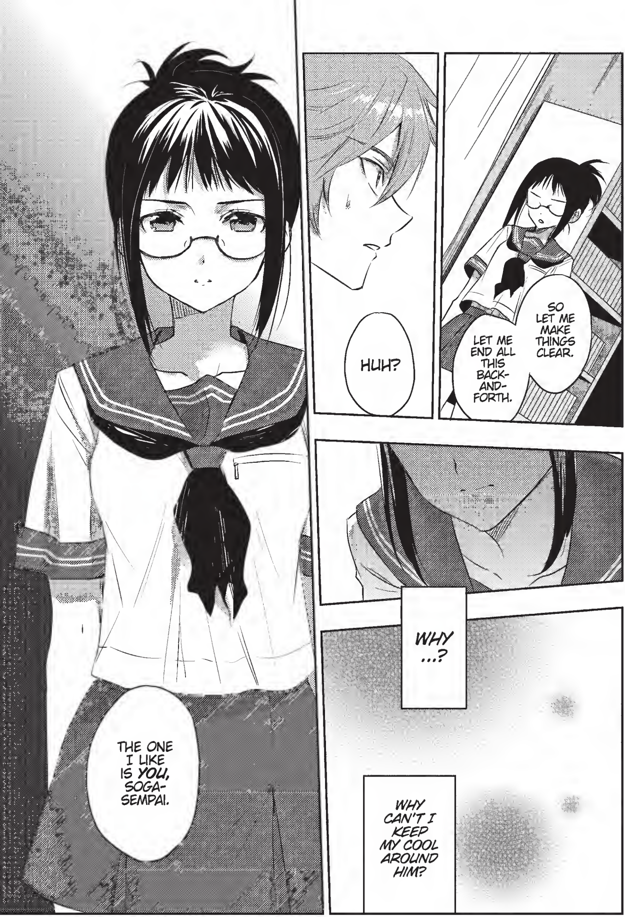

FWIIISH
PLIP
BLOOOSH
GYAAAH!!
EEEEK!!
SHAAA
NO WAY!
OH MY GAWD! WHERE DID THIS COME FROM?!
FWSSSSS
わははは

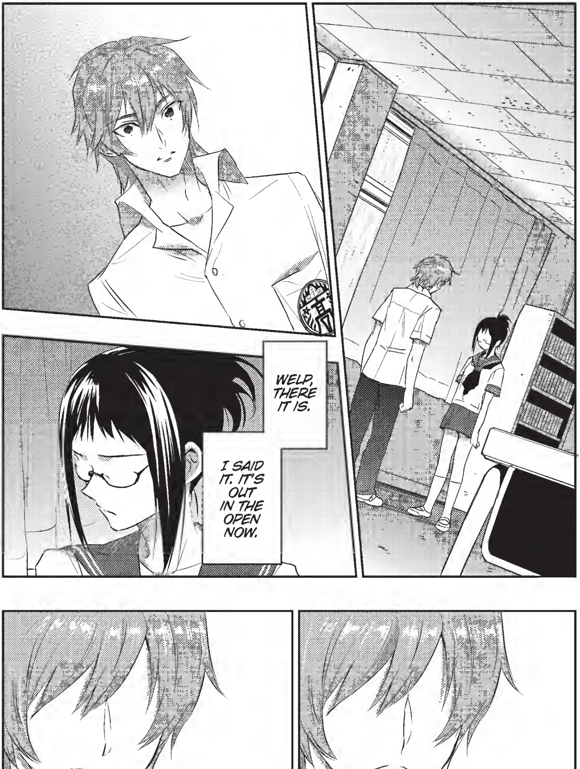

RAIN!
IT'S WATER, LITTLE SEEDS! WATER! NOW IT'S TIME FOR YOU TO WAKE UP AND SPROUT!!
ER, ISN'T IT A LITTLE EARLY FOR THAT?
WE JUST SPIT THEM OUT A FEW MINUTES AGO.
SHWAK
YOWZERS! WHERE'D ALL THIS RAIN COME FROM?!
YIKES.
THE SCHEDULE SHEET IS DRENCHED.
SHOOP

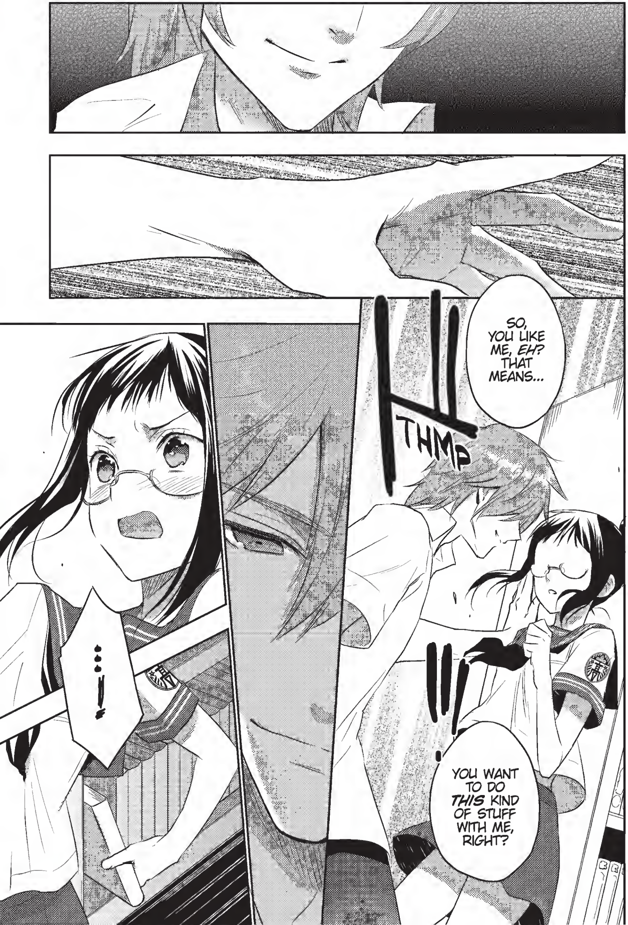

YO, SEMPAI!
HM? WHERE'S HOTAKA?
THE POOR GUY IS STUCK OUTSIDE.
DOWN THERE. SEE?
TEE HEE!
THEY WERE HAVING SUCH A NICE LUNCH OUT THERE, TOO.
BUT THEN... *BLOOSH!* HERE CAME THE RAIN.

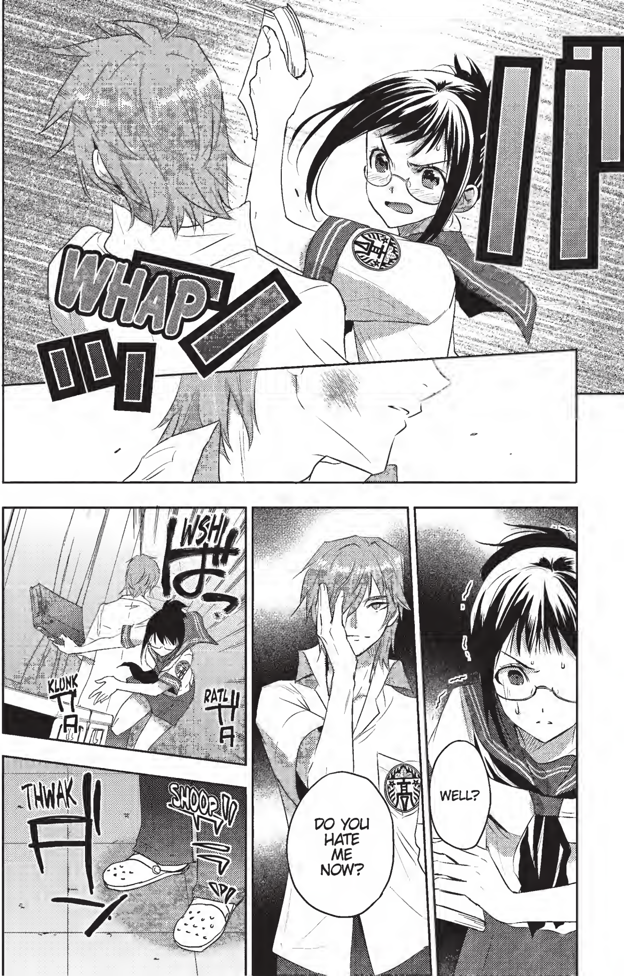

シャッ
SHHHK
STOP IT.
DON'T LOOK AT THAT.
WHY NOT?
YOU DON'T HAVE TO *MAKE* YOURSELF WATCH.
IT'S OKAY.
I UNDERSTAND, ON-CHAN.
I *KNOW* WHAT YOU HAVE TO BE FEELING. DON'T WORRY, OKAY?
BESIDES, IT'S OBVIOUS THAT HOTAKA WOULD MAKE A MUCH BETTER MATCH WITH YOU THAN *THAT*.
WHAT ON EARTH ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?

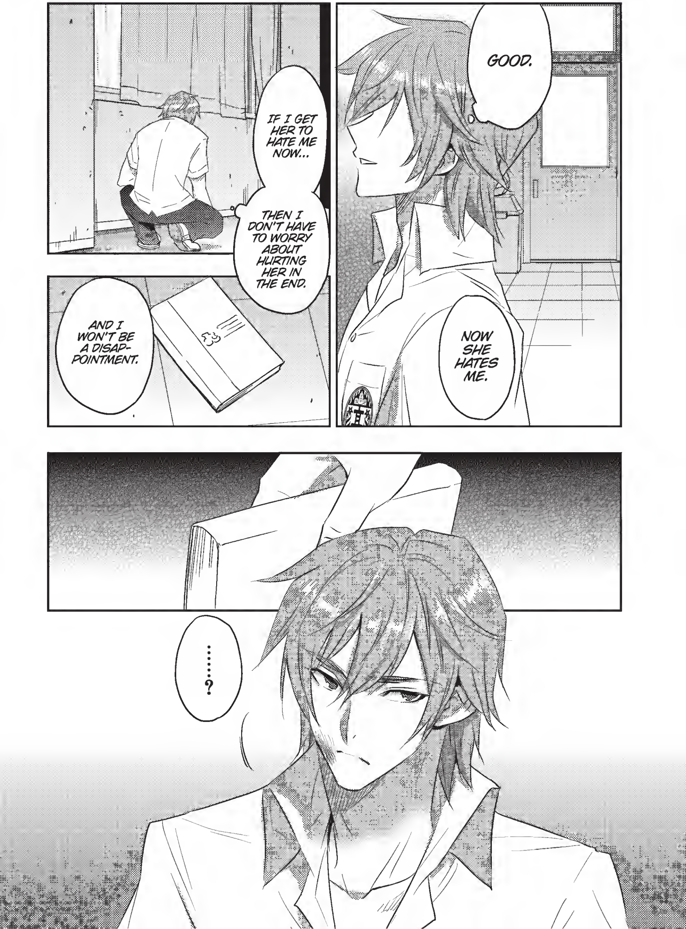

YOU DON'T REALLY UNDERSTAND A THING, DO YOU, SEMPAI?
I'M *NOT* IN LOVE WITH THE CAPTAIN. I'VE NEVER BEEN. WHY CAN'T YOU SEE THAT?
MAYBE IT'S BECAUSE YOU NEVER REALLY *TRIED* TO SEE?
BUT *WHY* HAVEN'T YOU TRIED, SEMPAI?
IS IT BECAUSE I'M JUST SO *WAY OFF* YOUR STANDARDS?
IS THAT WHAT YOU'RE TRYING TO TELL ME?
IN THAT CASE, I UNDERSTAND.
I *GET* IT. YOU DON'T HAVE TO *RUB* MY FACE IN IT EVERY TIME, THANK YOU.

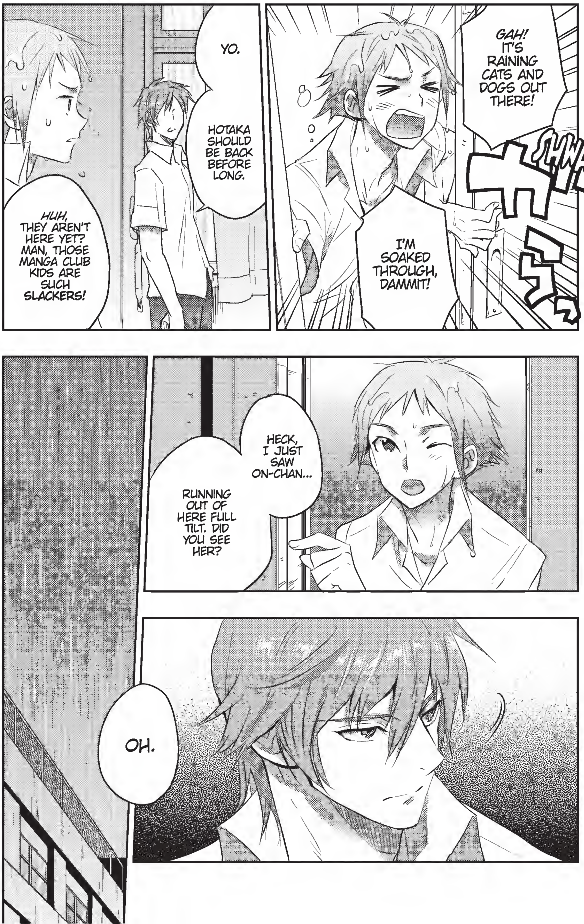

SO LET ME MAKE THINGS CLEAR.
LET ME END ALL THIS BACK-AND-FORTH.
HUH?
THE ONE I LIKE IS *YOU,* SOGA-SEMPAI.
WHY ...?
WHY CAN'T I KEEP MY COOL AROUND HIM?

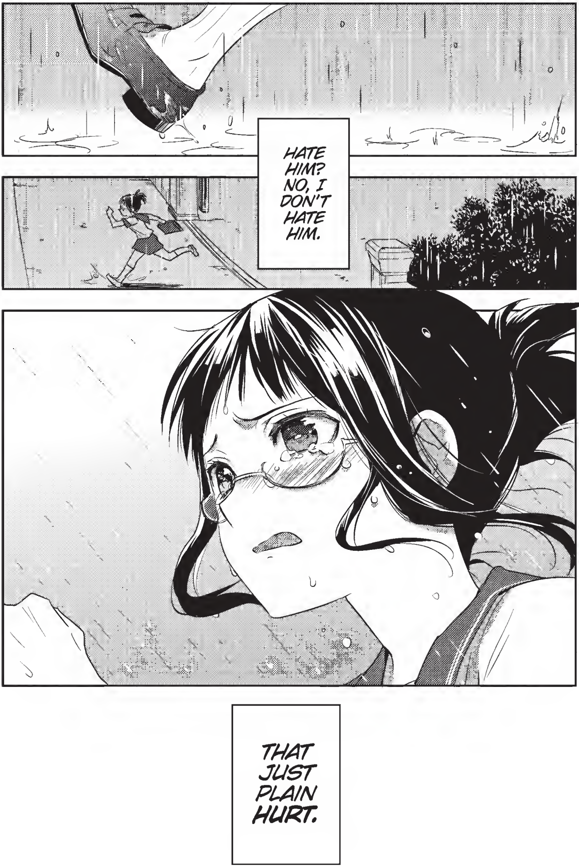

WELP, THERE IT IS.
I SAID IT. IT'S OUT IN THE OPEN NOW.


SO, YOU LIKE ME, *EH*? THAT MEANS...
THMP
YOU WANT TO DO *THIS* KIND OF STUFF WITH ME, RIGHT?
!!
...!!

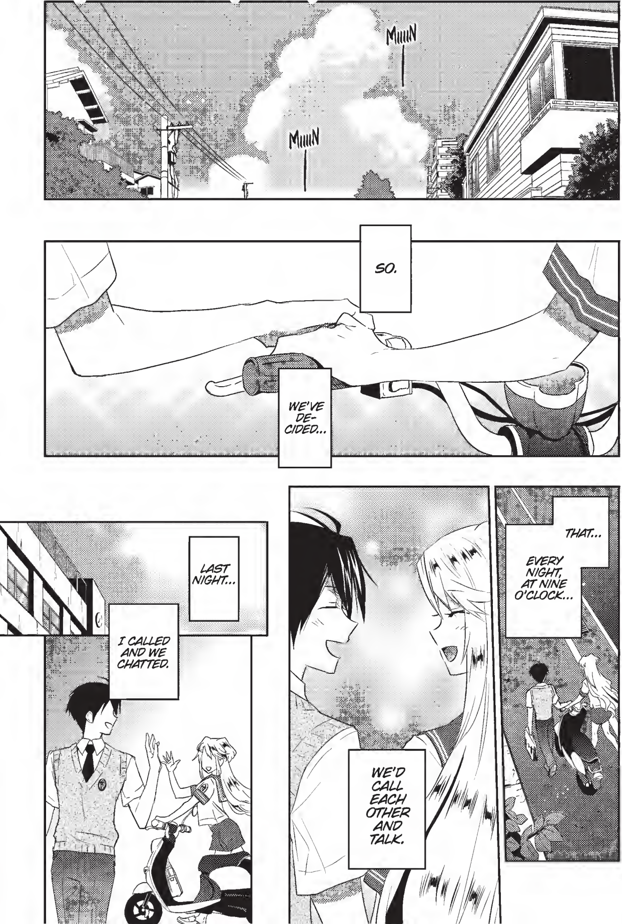

WHAP
WSH
ばっ
KLUNK
RATL
THWAK
SHOOP
WELL?
DO YOU HATE ME NOW?

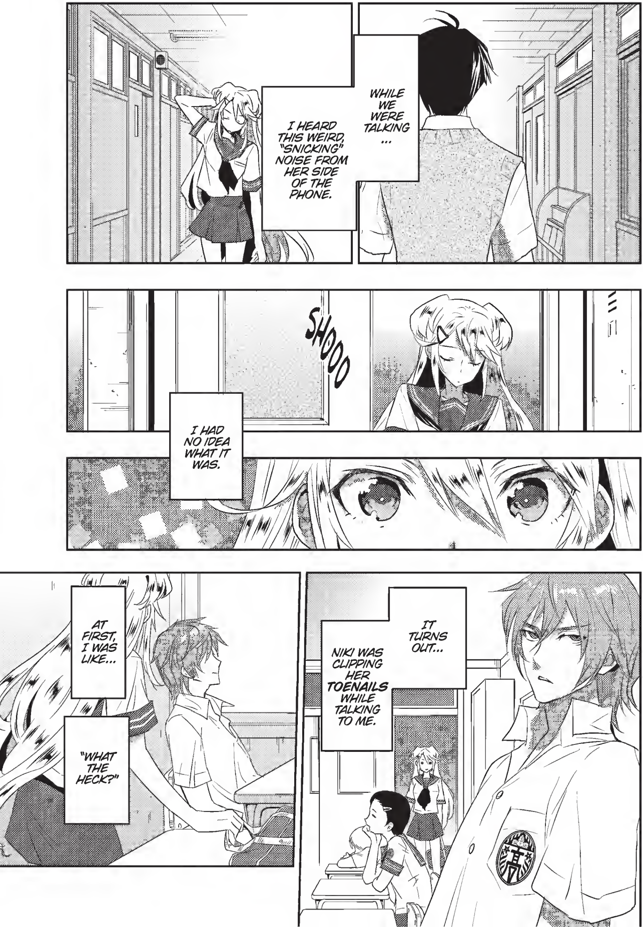

GOOD.
NOW SHE HATES ME.
IF I GET HER TO HATE ME NOW...
THEN I DON'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT HURTING HER IN THE END.
AND I WON'T BE A DISAPPOINTMENT.
......?

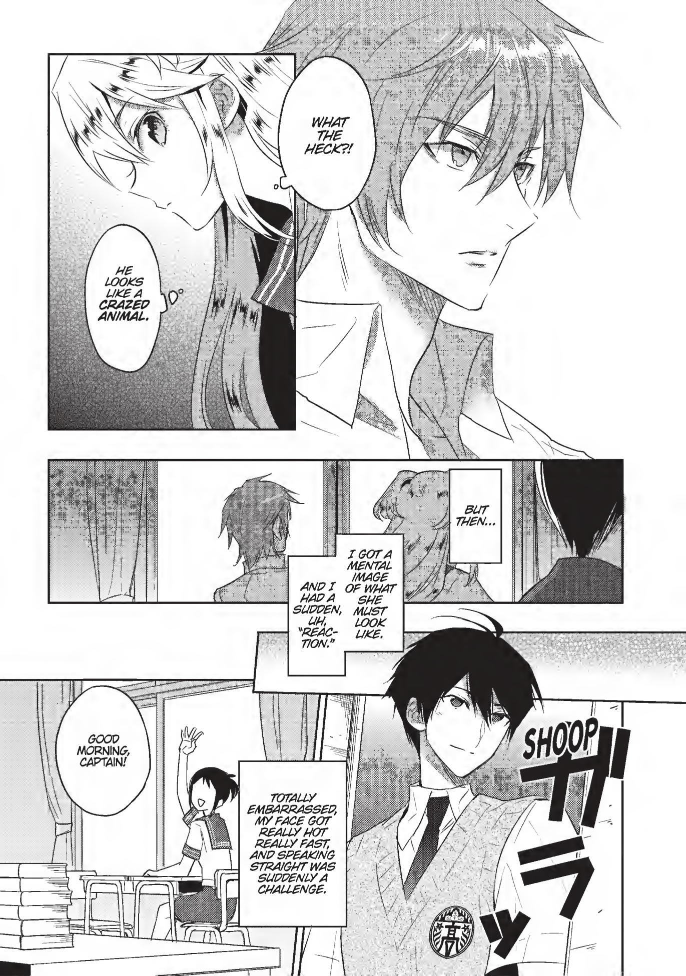

GAH! IT'S RAINING CATS AND DOGS OUT THERE!
SHWAK
ガラッ
I'M SOAKED THROUGH, DAMMIT!
YO.
HOTAKA SHOULD BE BACK BEFORE LONG.
HUH, THEY AREN'T HERE YET? MAN, THOSE MANGA CLUB KIDS ARE SUCH SLACKERS!
HECK, I JUST SAW ON-CHAN...
RUNNING OUT OF HERE FULL TILT. DID YOU SEE HER?
OH.


HATE HIM? NO, I DON'T HATE HIM.
THAT JUST PLAIN HURT.

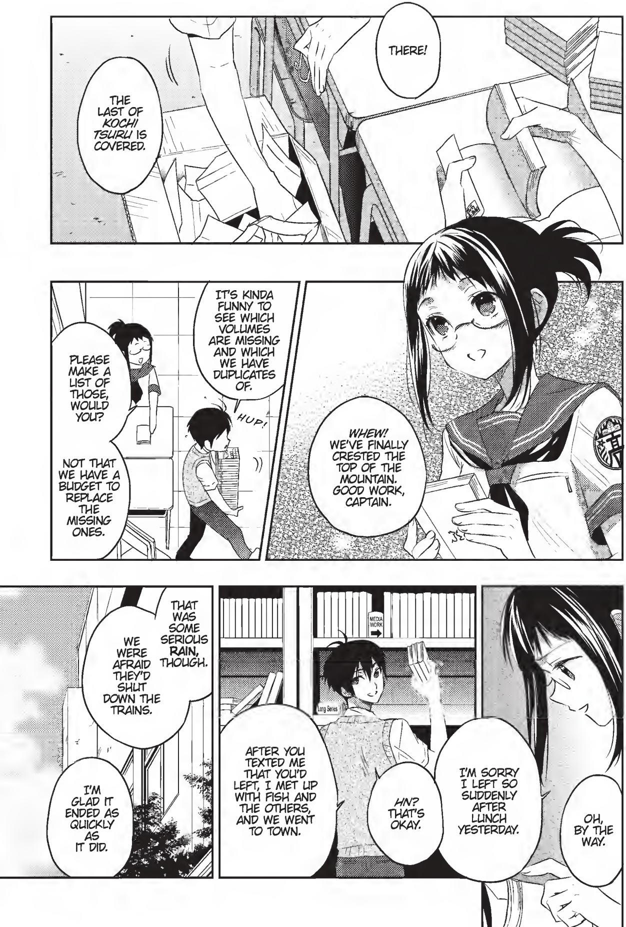
Chapter 14: Like a Key in a Keyhole

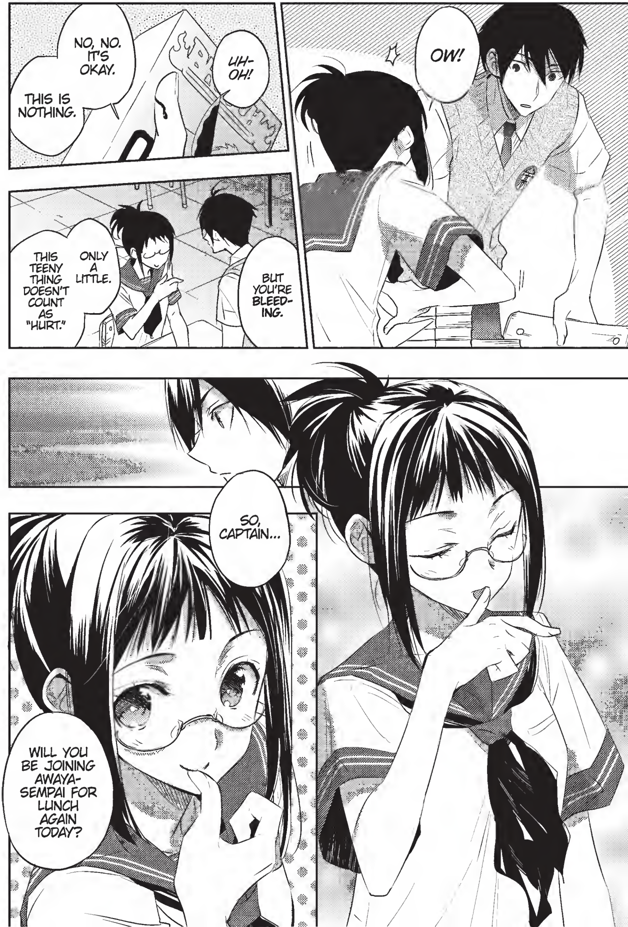

MiiiiN
MiiiiN
SO.
WE'VE DE-CIDED...
THAT...
EVERY NIGHT, AT NINE O'CLOCK...
WE'D CALL EACH OTHER AND TALK.
LAST NIGHT...
I CALLED AND WE CHATTED.

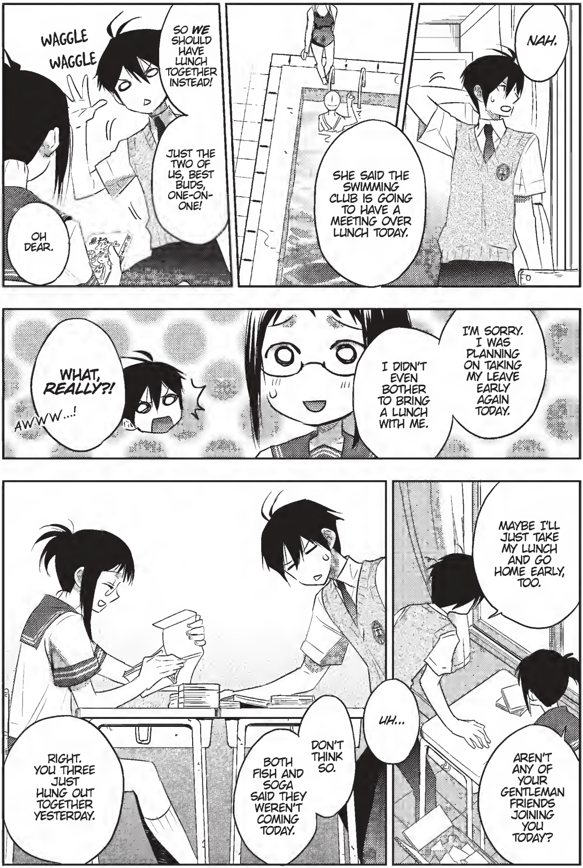

WHILE WE WERE TALKING ...
I HEARD THIS WEIRD, "SNICKING" NOISE FROM HER SIDE OF THE PHONE.
SHOOO
I HAD NO IDEA WHAT IT WAS.
IT TURNS OUT...
NIKI WAS CLIPPING HER TOENAILS WHILE TALKING TO ME.
AT FIRST, I WAS LIKE...
"WHAT THE HECK?"

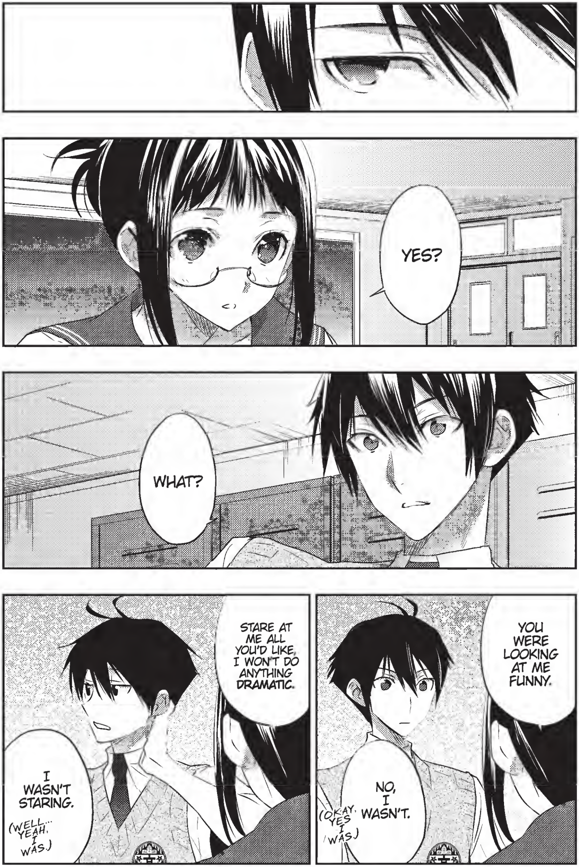

WHAT THE HECK?!
HE LOOKS LIKE A **CRAZED ANIMAL.**
BUT THEN...
I GOT A MENTAL IMAGE OF WHAT SHE MUST LOOK LIKE.
AND I HAD A SUDDEN, UH, "REACTION."
SHOOP
ガラッ
TOTALLY EMBARRASSED, MY FACE GOT REALLY HOT REALLY FAST, AND SPEAKING STRAIGHT WAS SUDDENLY A CHALLENGE.
GOOD MORNING, CAPTAIN!

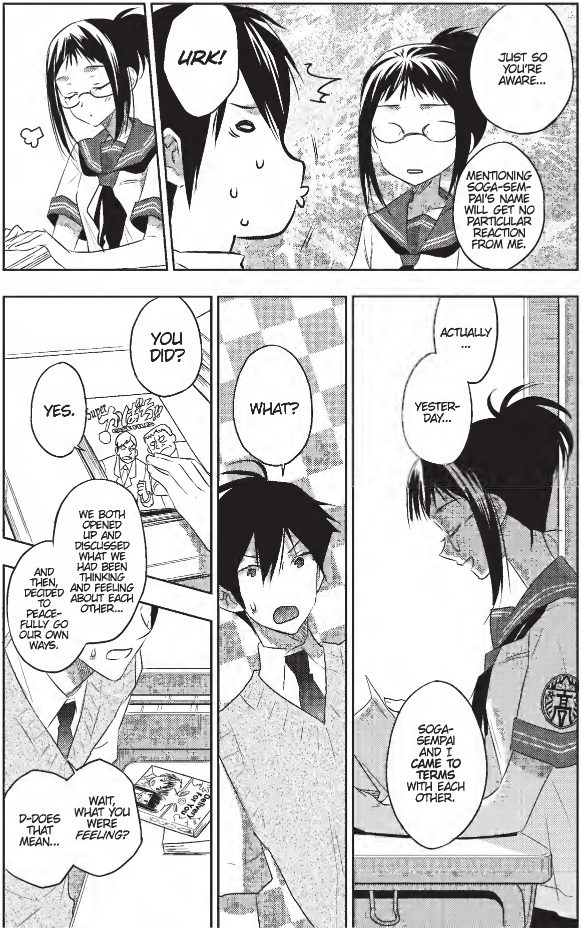
Chapter 14: Like a Key in a Keyhole

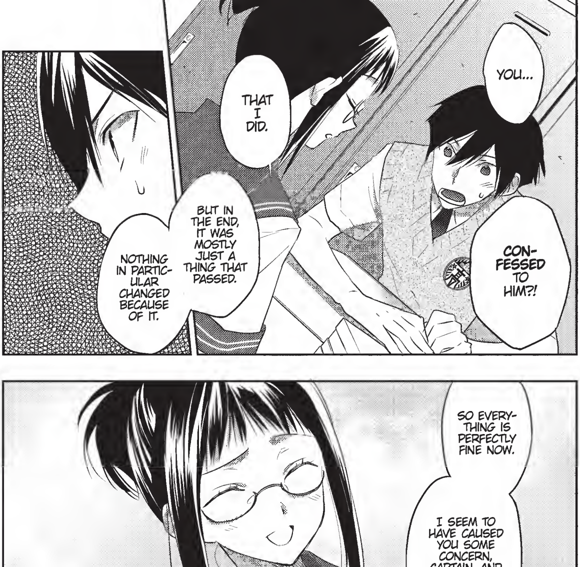

THERE!
THE LAST OF *KOCHI TSURU* IS COVERED.
WHEW! WE'VE FINALLY CRESTED THE TOP OF THE MOUNTAIN. GOOD WORK, CAPTAIN.
IT'S KINDA FUNNY TO SEE WHICH VOLUMES ARE MISSING AND WHICH WE HAVE DUPLICATES OF.
HUP!
PLEASE MAKE A LIST OF THOSE, WOULD YOU?
NOT THAT WE HAVE A BUDGET TO REPLACE THE MISSING ONES.
OH, BY THE WAY.
I'M SORRY I LEFT SO SUDDENLY AFTER LUNCH YESTERDAY.
MEDIA WORK
Long Series
HN? THAT'S OKAY.
AFTER YOU TEXTED ME THAT YOU'D LEFT, I MET UP WITH FISH AND THE OTHERS, AND WE WENT TO TOWN.
THAT WAS SOME SERIOUS **RAIN**, THOUGH.
WE WERE AFRAID THEY'D SHUT DOWN THE TRAINS.
I'M GLAD IT ENDED AS QUICKLY AS IT DID.

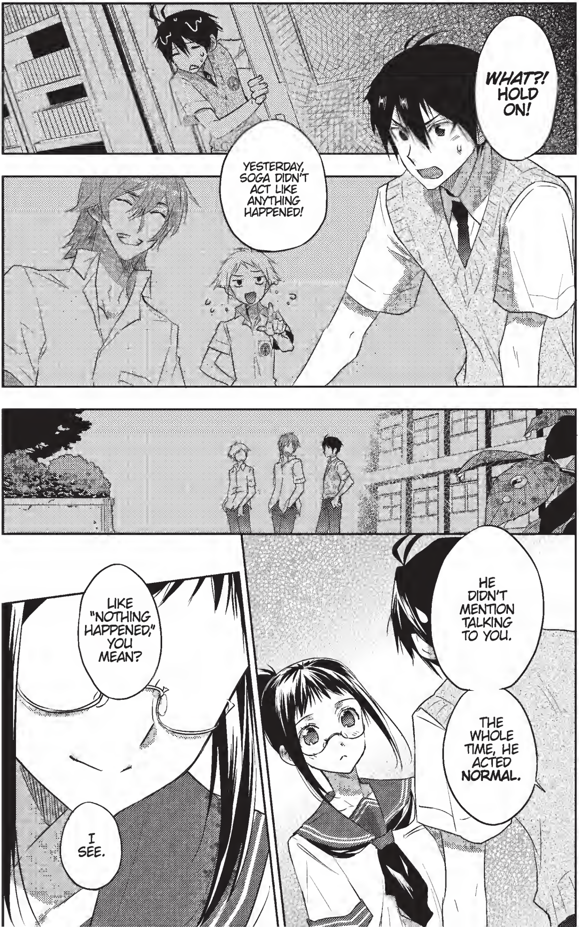

OW!
UH-OH!
NO, NO. IT'S OKAY.
THIS IS NOTHING.
BUT YOU'RE BLEEDING.
ONLY A LITTLE.
THIS TEENY THING DOESN'T COUNT AS "HURT."
SO, CAPTAIN...
WILL YOU BE JOINING AWAYA-SEMPAI FOR LUNCH AGAIN TODAY?

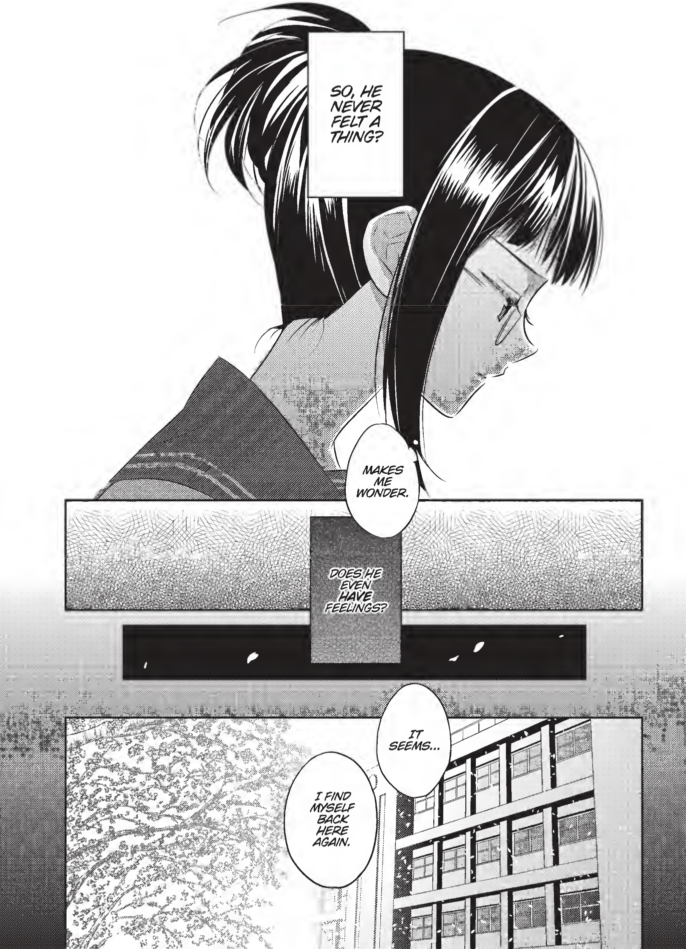

NAH.
SHE SAID THE SWIMMING CLUB IS GOING TO HAVE A MEETING OVER LUNCH TODAY.
WAGGLE WAGGLE
SO *WE* SHOULD HAVE LUNCH TOGETHER INSTEAD!
JUST THE TWO OF US, BEST BUDS, ONE-ON-ONE!
OH DEAR.
I'M SORRY. I WAS PLANNING ON TAKING MY LEAVE EARLY AGAIN TODAY.
I DIDN'T EVEN BOTHER TO BRING A LUNCH WITH ME.
WHAT, *REALLY?!*
AWWW...!
MAYBE I'LL JUST TAKE MY LUNCH AND GO HOME EARLY, TOO.
AREN'T ANY OF YOUR GENTLEMAN FRIENDS JOINING YOU TODAY?
UH...
DON'T THINK SO.
BOTH FISH AND SOGA SAID THEY WEREN'T COMING TODAY.
RIGHT. YOU THREE JUST HUNG OUT TOGETHER YESTERDAY.

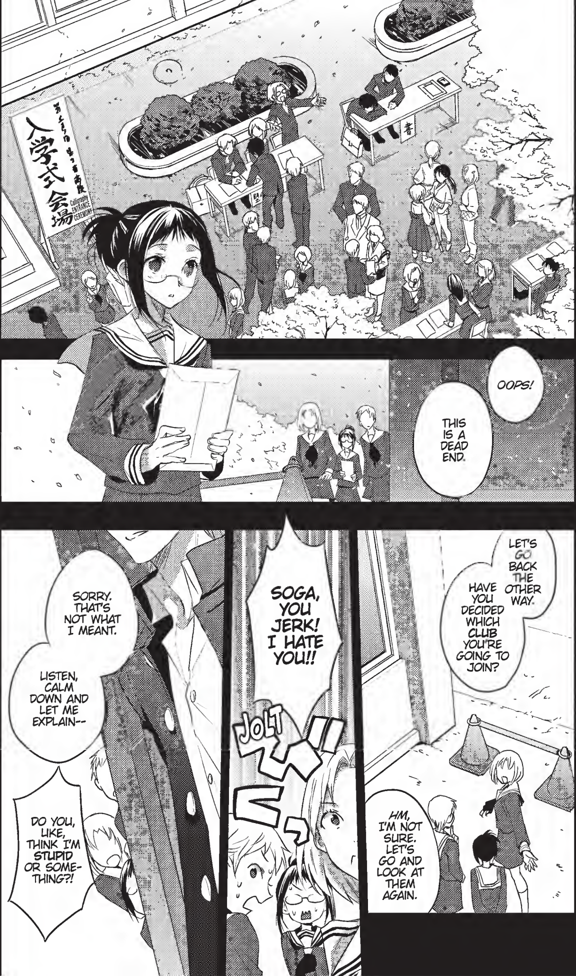

YES?
WHAT?
YOU WERE LOOKING AT ME FUNNY.
NO, I WASN'T.
(OKAY, YES I WAS.)
STARE AT ME ALL YOU'D LIKE, I WON'T DO ANYTHING DRAMATIC.
I WASN'T STARING.
(WELL... YEAH, I WAS.)

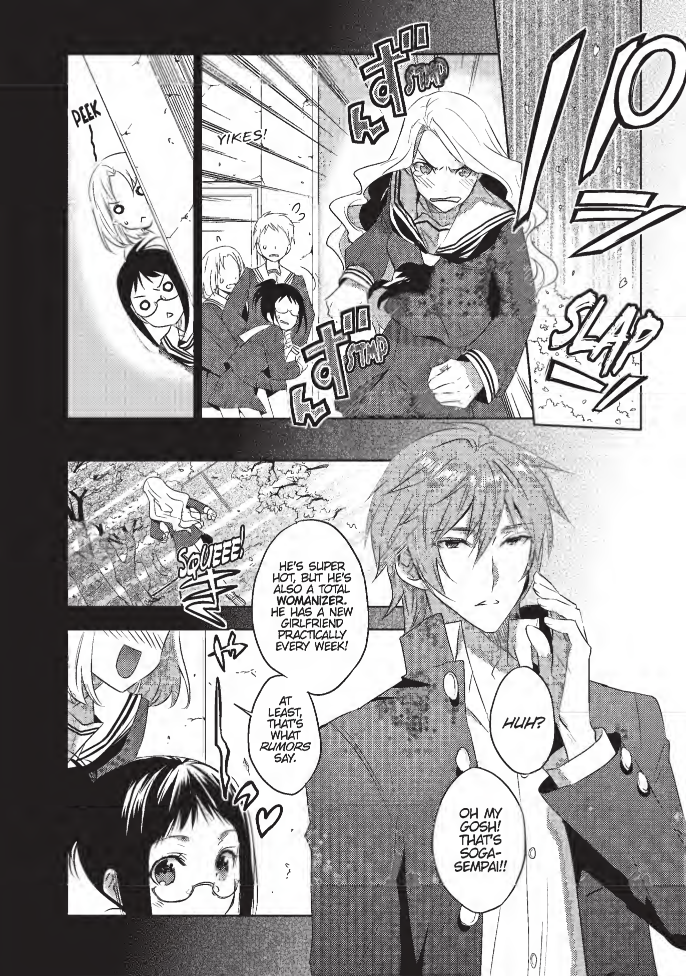

JUST SO YOU'RE AWARE...
MENTIONING SOGA-SEMPAI'S NAME WILL GET NO PARTICULAR REACTION FROM ME.
URK!
ACTUALLY...
YESTERDAY...
SOGA-SEMPAI AND I CAME TO TERMS WITH EACH OTHER.
WHAT?
YOU DID?
YES.
Super CASE FILES
WE BOTH OPENED UP AND DISCUSSED WHAT WE HAD BEEN THINKING AND FEELING ABOUT EACH OTHER...
AND THEN, DECIDED TO PEACEFULLY GO OUR OWN WAYS.
WAIT, WHAT YOU WERE *FEELING*?
D-DOES THAT MEAN...
Delivery for You

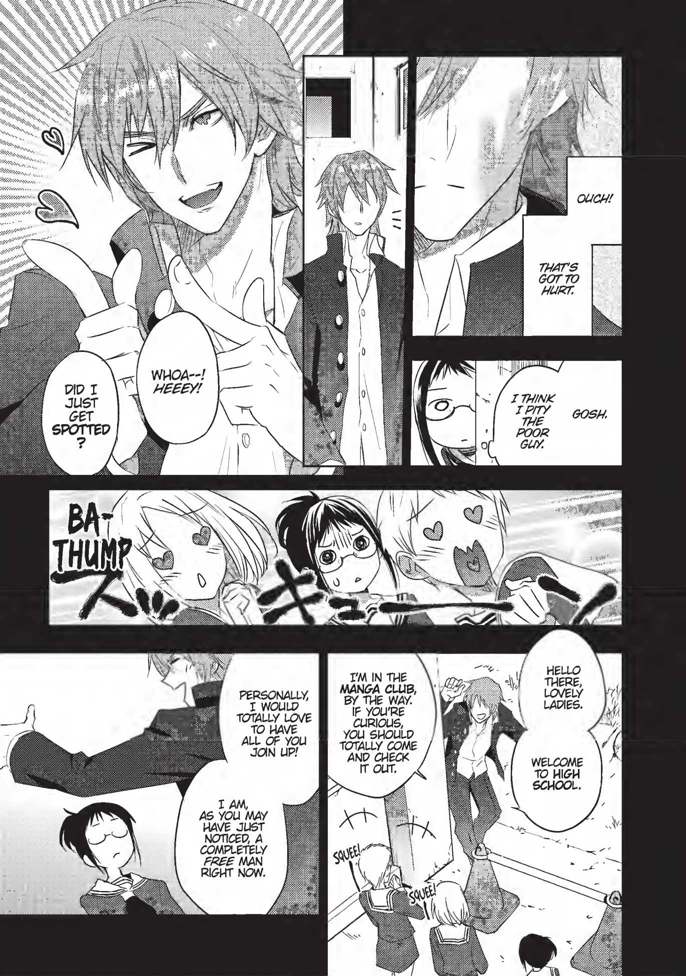

YOU...
CONFESSED TO HIM?!
THAT I DID.
BUT IN THE END, IT WAS MOSTLY JUST A THING THAT PASSED.
NOTHING IN PARTICULAR CHANGED BECAUSE OF IT.
SO EVERYTHING IS PERFECTLY FINE NOW.
I SEEM TO HAVE CAUSED YOU SOME CONCERN, CAPTAIN, AND FOR THAT I APOLOGIZE.
BUT IT'S ALL OVER AND DONE WITH, NOW. WE CAN GO BACK TO EVERYTHING AS USUAL.
HUH?
WHOA!
W-WAIT... YOU CAN'T--!
WHAP
NONE OF IT EVER HAPPENED.
JUST THINK OF IT THAT WAY, *PLEASE.*
T-dai Story

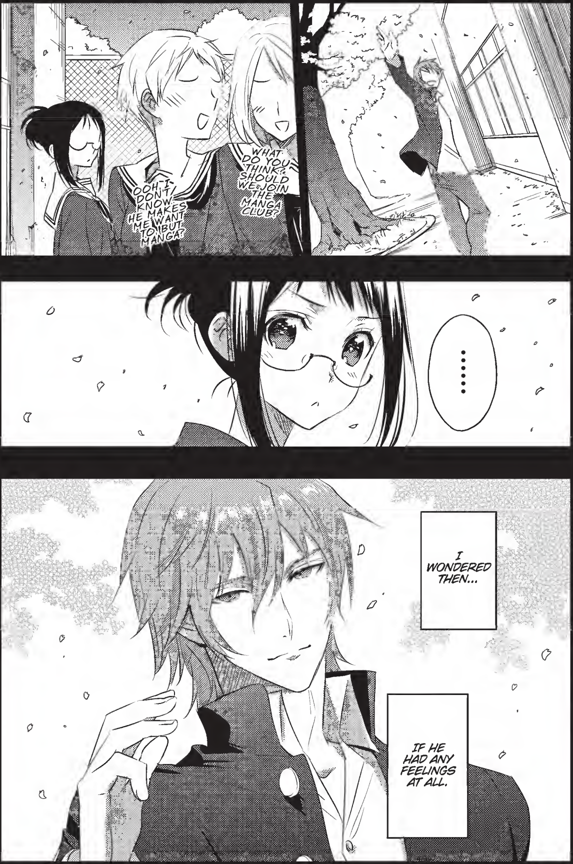

WHAT?! HOLD ON!
YESTERDAY, SOGA DIDN'T ACT LIKE ANYTHING HAPPENED!
HE DIDN'T MENTION TALKING TO YOU.
THE WHOLE TIME, HE ACTED NORMAL.
LIKE "NOTHING HAPPENED," YOU MEAN?
I SEE.

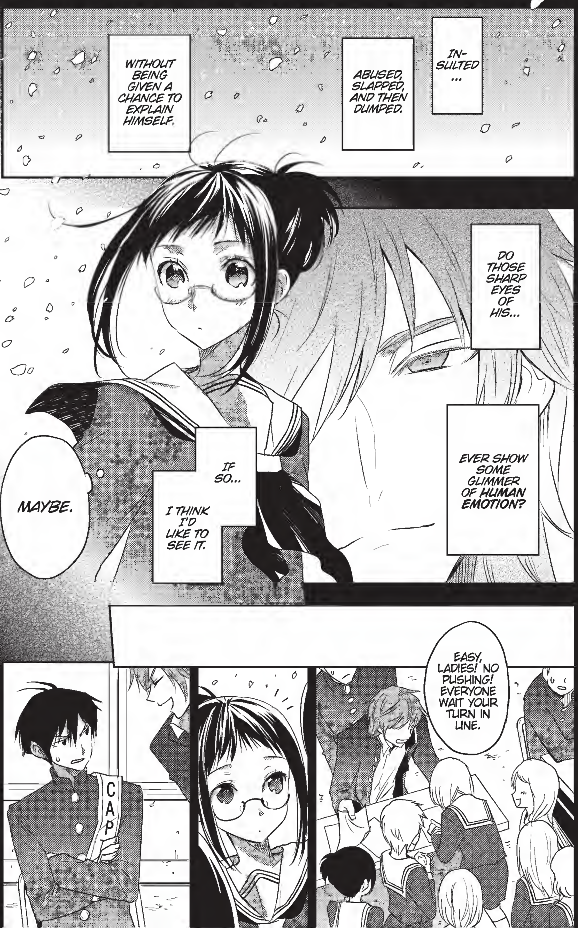

SO, HE NEVER FELT A THING?
MAKES ME WONDER.
DOES HE EVEN HAVE FEELINGS?
IT SEEMS...
I FIND MYSELF BACK HERE AGAIN.

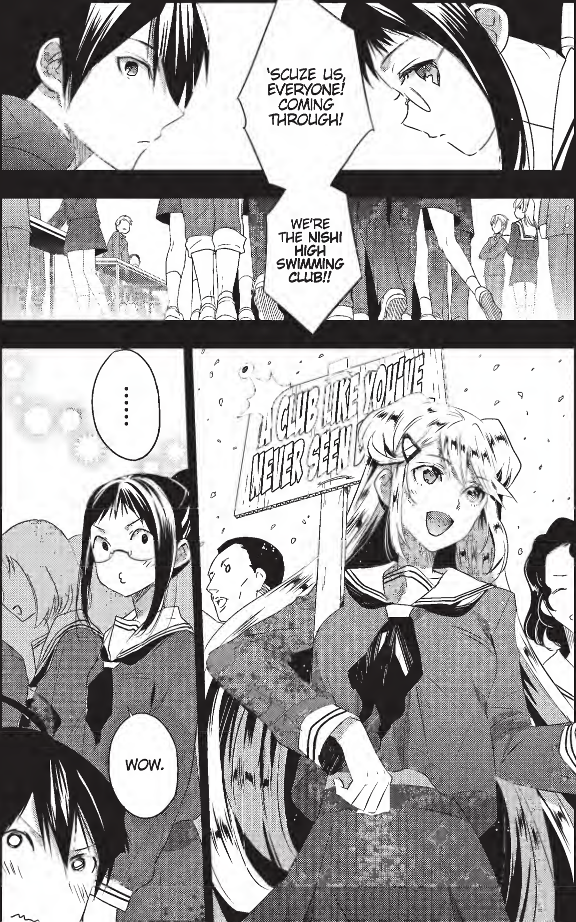

入学式会場
Calligraphy ENTRANCE CEREMONY
書
OOPS!
THIS IS A DEAD END.
LET'S GO BACK THE OTHER WAY.
HAVE YOU DECIDED WHICH CLUB YOU'RE GOING TO JOIN?
HM, I'M NOT SURE. LET'S GO AND LOOK AT THEM AGAIN.
SOGA, YOU JERK! I HATE YOU!!
JOLT
SORRY. THAT'S NOT WHAT I MEANT.
LISTEN, CALM DOWN AND LET ME EXPLAIN--
DO YOU, LIKE, THINK I'M STUPID OR SOMETHING?!

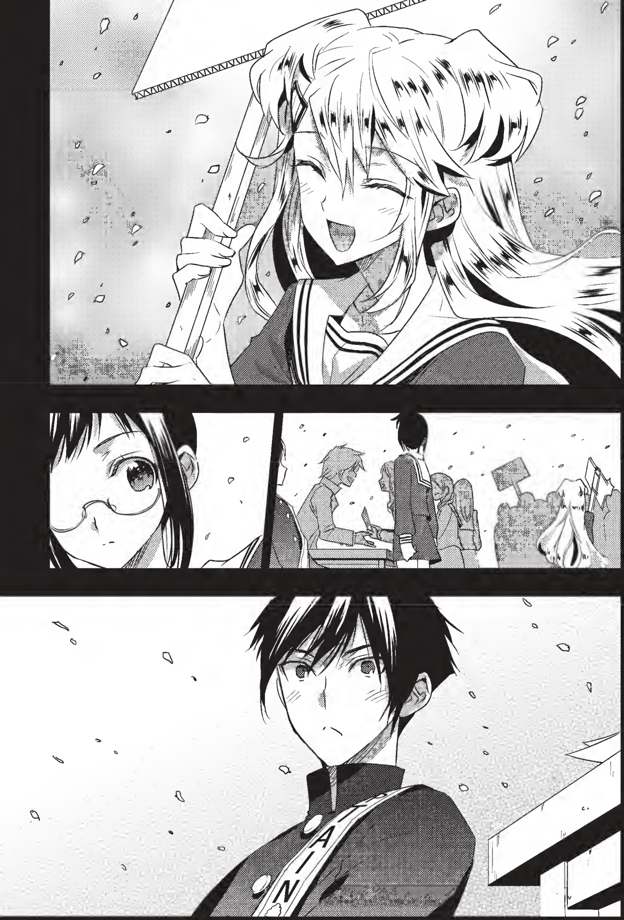

パ
SLAP
ずん STMP
ずん STMP
YIKES!
PEEK
HUH?
OH MY GOSH! THAT'S SOGA-SEMPAI!!
HE'S SUPER HOT, BUT HE'S ALSO A TOTAL WOMANIZER. HE HAS A NEW GIRLFRIEND PRACTICALLY EVERY WEEK!
AT LEAST, THAT'S WHAT RUMORS SAY.
SQUEEE! き


OUCH!
THAT'S GOT TO HURT.
GOSH.
I THINK I PITY THE POOR GUY.
WHOA--! HEEEY!
DID I JUST GET SPOTTED?
BA-THUMP
HELLO THERE, LOVELY LADIES.
WELCOME TO HIGH SCHOOL.
I'M IN THE MANGA CLUB, BY THE WAY. IF YOU'RE CURIOUS, YOU SHOULD TOTALLY COME AND CHECK IT OUT.
SQUEE!
SQUEE!
PERSONALLY, I WOULD TOTALLY LOVE TO HAVE ALL OF YOU JOIN UP!
I AM, AS YOU MAY HAVE JUST NOTICED, A COMPLETELY FREE MAN RIGHT NOW.


WHAT DO YOU THINK? SHOULD WE JOIN THE MANGA CLUB?
OOH—I DON'T KNOW. HE MAKES ME WANT TO BUT MANGA?
……
I WONDERED THEN...
IF HE HAD ANY FEELINGS AT ALL.


IN-SULTED...
ABUSED, SLAPPED, AND THEN DUMPED.
WITHOUT BEING GIVEN A CHANCE TO EXPLAIN HIMSELF.
DO THOSE SHARP EYES OF HIS...
EVER SHOW SOME GLIMMER OF **HUMAN EMOTION?**
IF SO...
I THINK I'D LIKE TO SEE IT.
MAYBE.
EASY, LADIES! NO PUSHING! EVERYONE WAIT YOUR TURN IN LINE.
CAP


'SCUZE US, EVERYONE! COMING THROUGH!
WE'RE THE NISHI HIGH SWIMMING CLUB!!
A CLUB LIKE YOU'VE NEVER SEEN
……
WOW.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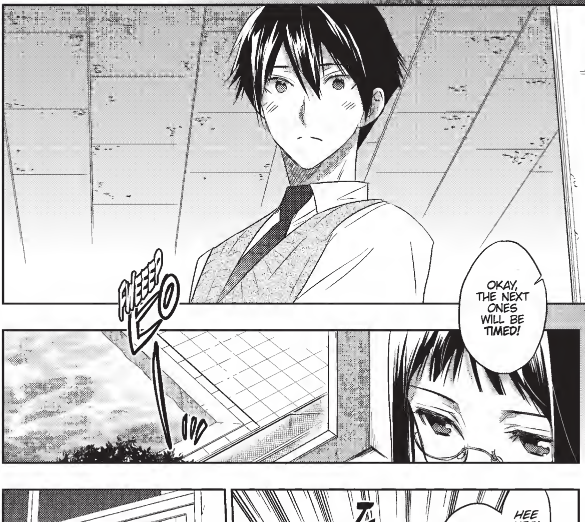
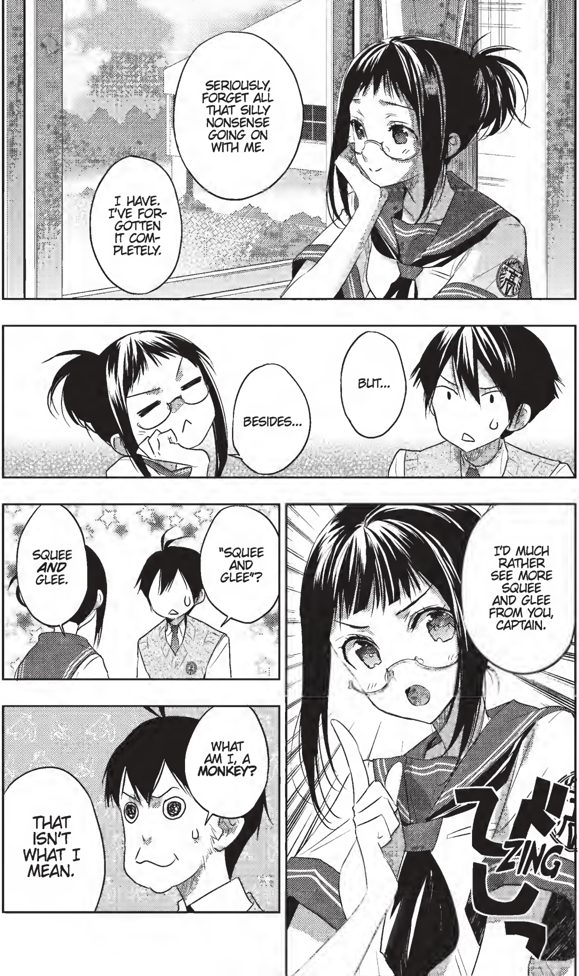
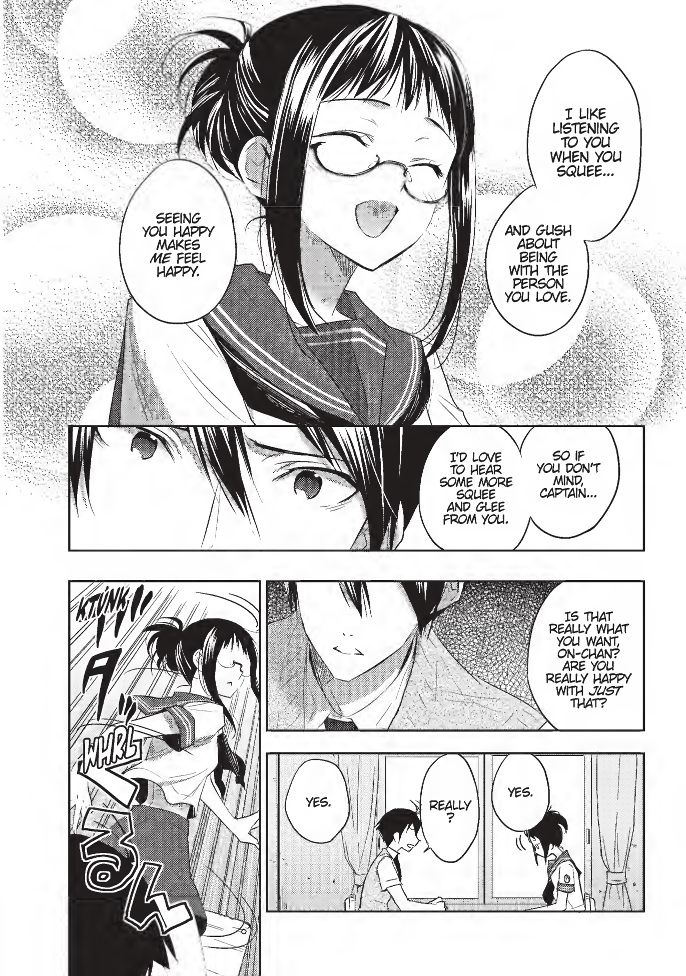
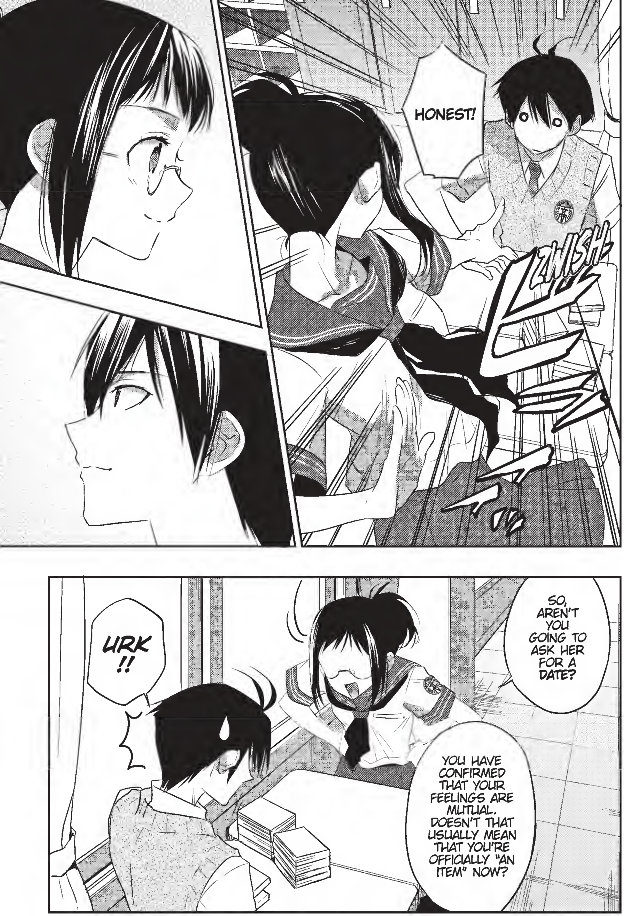
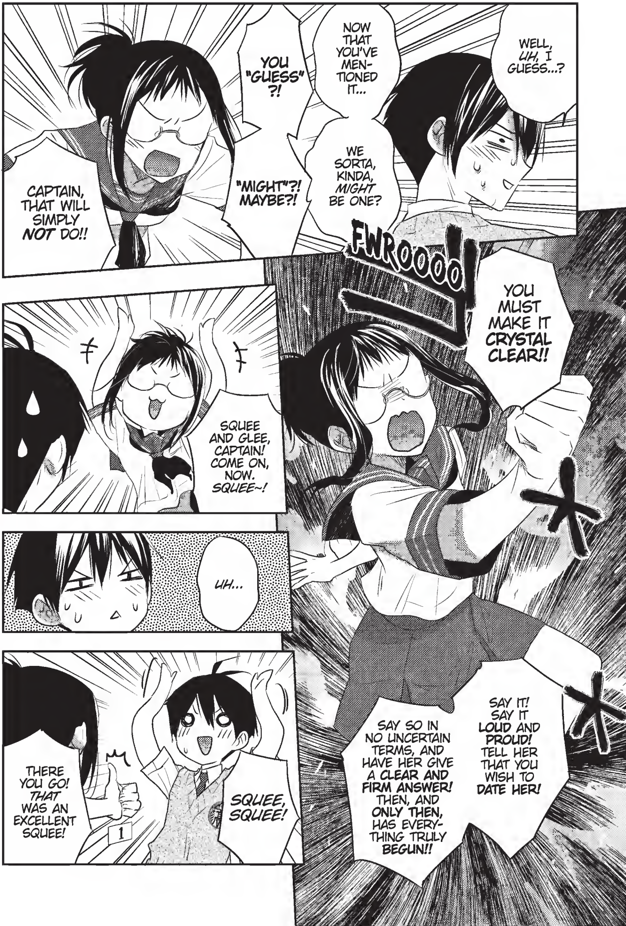
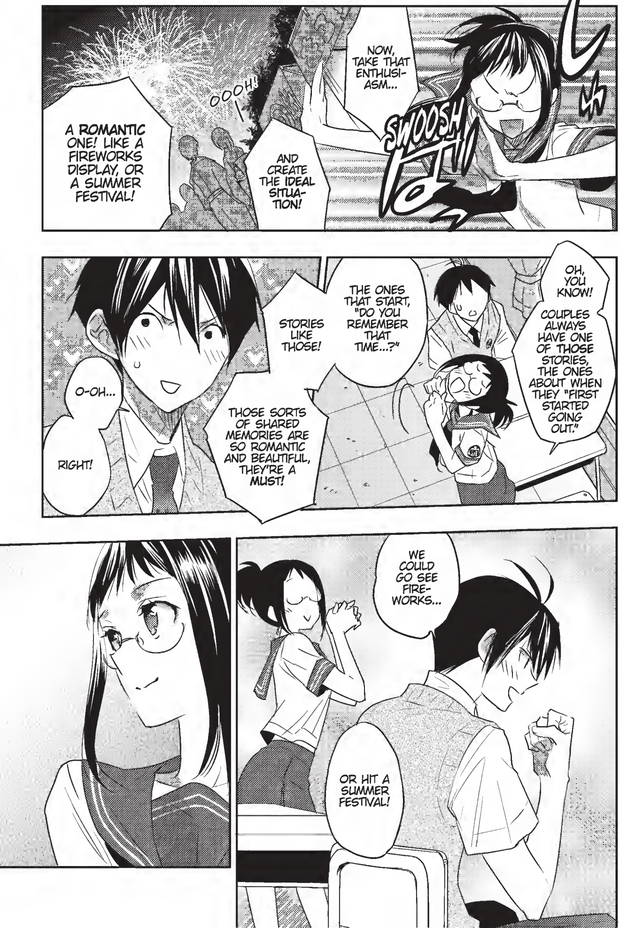

OKAY, THE NEXT ONES WILL BE TIMED!
FWEEEP
HEE HEE! CAPTAIN, AWAYA-SEMPAI IS STILL IN MAKE-UP CLASSES.
JOLT
AH!
OH! N-NO, I WASN'T, *UM,* UH...!
IT'S OKAY, CAPTAIN.

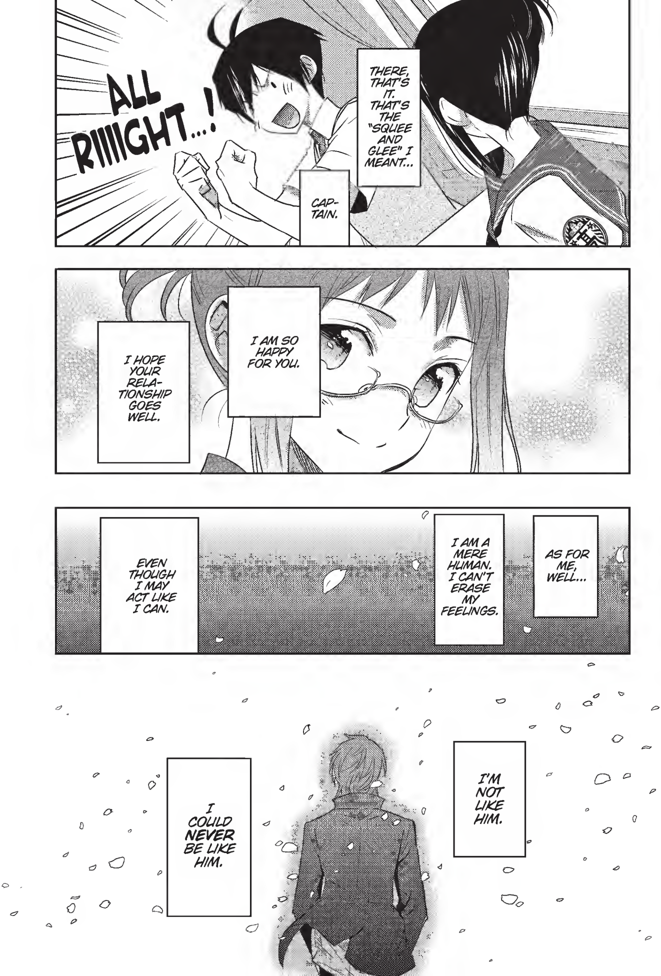

SERIOUSLY, FORGET ALL THAT SILLY NONSENSE GOING ON WITH ME.
I HAVE. I'VE FORGOTTEN IT COMPLETELY.
BUT...
BESIDES...
I'D MUCH RATHER SEE MORE SQUEE AND GLEE FROM YOU, CAPTAIN.
ZING
"SQUEE AND GLEE"?
SQUEE *AND* GLEE.
WHAT AM I, A MONKEY?
THAT ISN'T WHAT I MEAN.

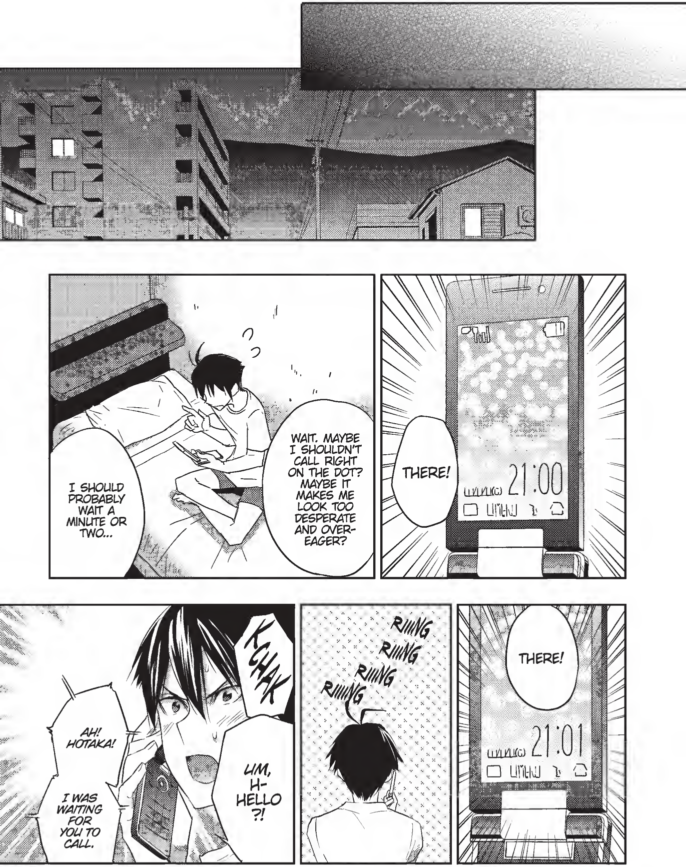

I LIKE LISTENING TO YOU WHEN YOU SQUEE...
AND GUSH ABOUT BEING WITH THE PERSON YOU LOVE.
SEEING YOU HAPPY MAKES *ME* FEEL HAPPY.
SO IF YOU DON'T MIND, CAPTAIN...
I'D LOVE TO HEAR SOME MORE SQUEE AND GLEE FROM YOU.
IS THAT REALLY WHAT YOU WANT, ON-CHAN? ARE YOU REALLY HAPPY WITH *JUST* THAT?
YES.
REALLY?
YES.
KTUNK
WHRL

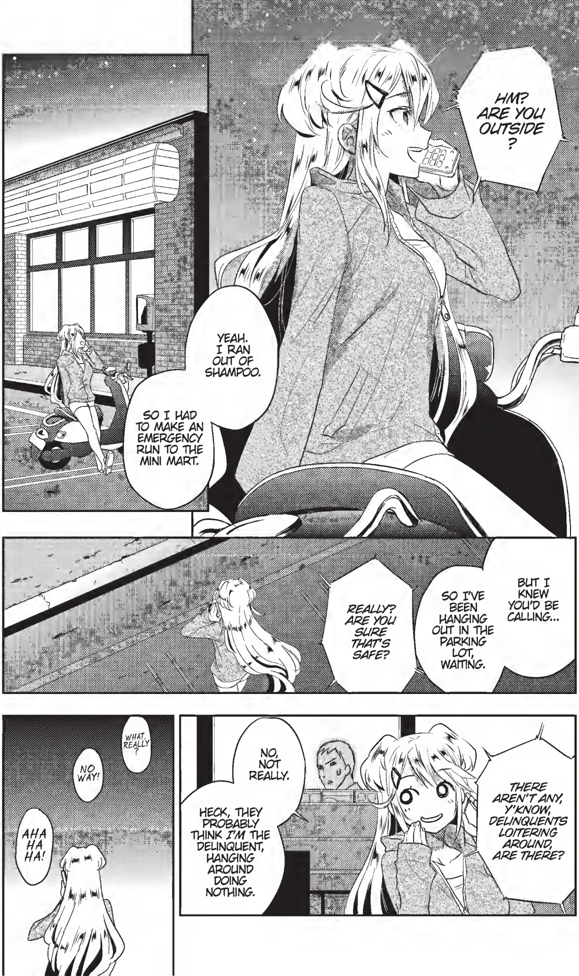

HONEST!
ZWISH
SO, AREN'T YOU GOING TO ASK HER FOR A DATE?
YOU HAVE CONFIRMED THAT YOUR FEELINGS ARE MUTUAL. DOESN'T THAT USUALLY MEAN THAT YOU'RE OFFICIALLY "AN ITEM" NOW?
URK !!

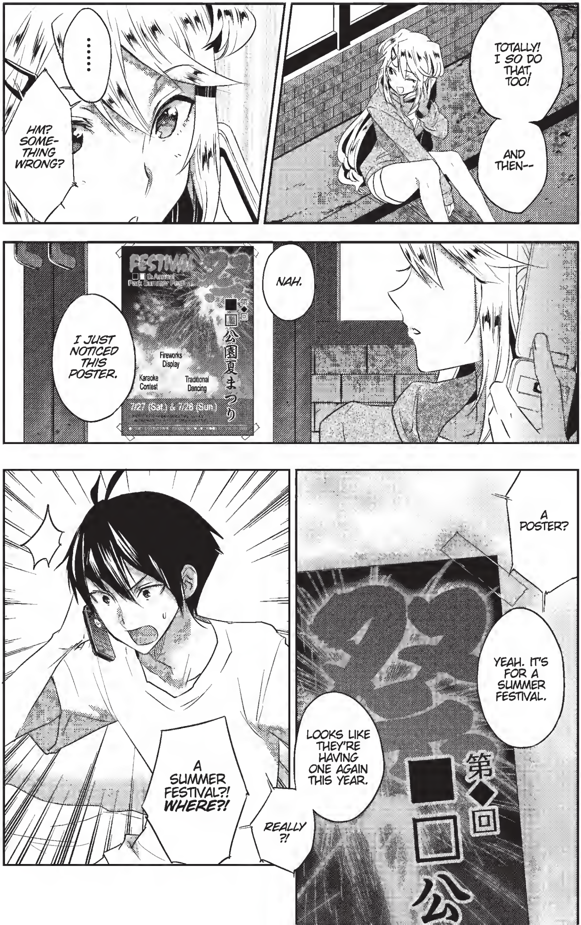

WELL, UH, I GUESS...?
NOW THAT YOU'VE MENTIONED IT...
WE SORTA, KINDA, MIGHT BE ONE?
YOU "GUESS"?!
"MIGHT"?! MAYBE?!
CAPTAIN, THAT WILL SIMPLY NOT DO!!
FWROOOOO
YOU MUST MAKE IT CRYSTAL CLEAR!!
SAY IT! SAY IT LOUD AND PROUD! TELL HER THAT YOU WISH TO DATE HER!
SAY SO IN NO UNCERTAIN TERMS, AND HAVE HER GIVE A CLEAR AND FIRM ANSWER! THEN, AND ONLY THEN, HAS EVERYTHING TRULY BEGUN!!
SQUEE AND GLEE, CAPTAIN! COME ON, NOW. SQUEE~!
UH...
SQUEE, SQUEE!
THERE YOU GO! THAT WAS AN EXCELLENT SQUEE!
1

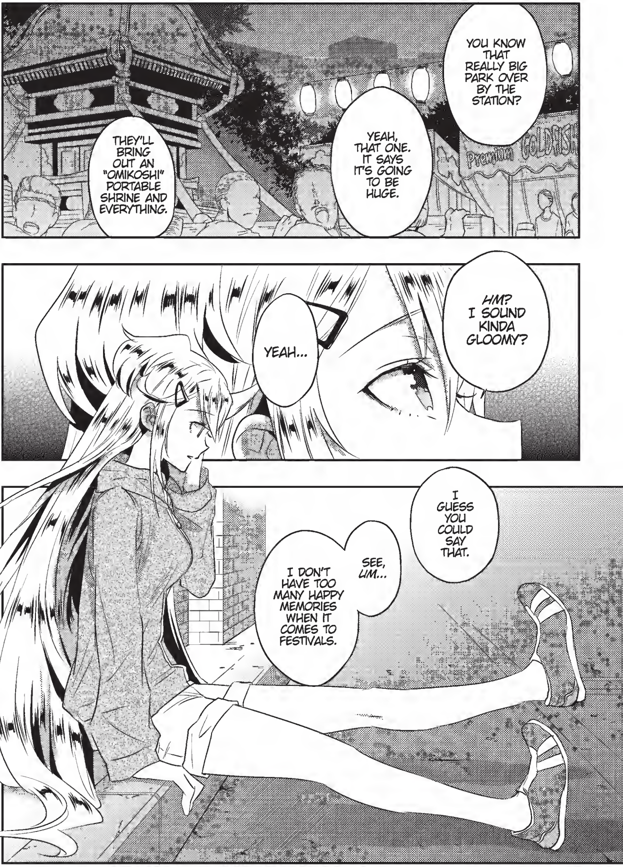

SWOOSH
NOW, TAKE THAT ENTHUSIASM...
AND CREATE THE IDEAL SITUATION!
OOOH!
A ROMANTIC ONE! LIKE A FIREWORKS DISPLAY, OR A SUMMER FESTIVAL!
OH, YOU KNOW!
COUPLES ALWAYS HAVE ONE OF THOSE STORIES, THE ONES ABOUT WHEN THEY "FIRST STARTED GOING OUT."
THE ONES THAT START, "DO YOU REMEMBER THAT TIME...?"
STORIES LIKE THOSE!
THOSE SORTS OF SHARED MEMORIES ARE SO ROMANTIC AND BEAUTIFUL, THEY'RE A MUST!
O-OH...
RIGHT!
WE COULD GO SEE FIREWORKS...
OR HIT A SUMMER FESTIVAL!

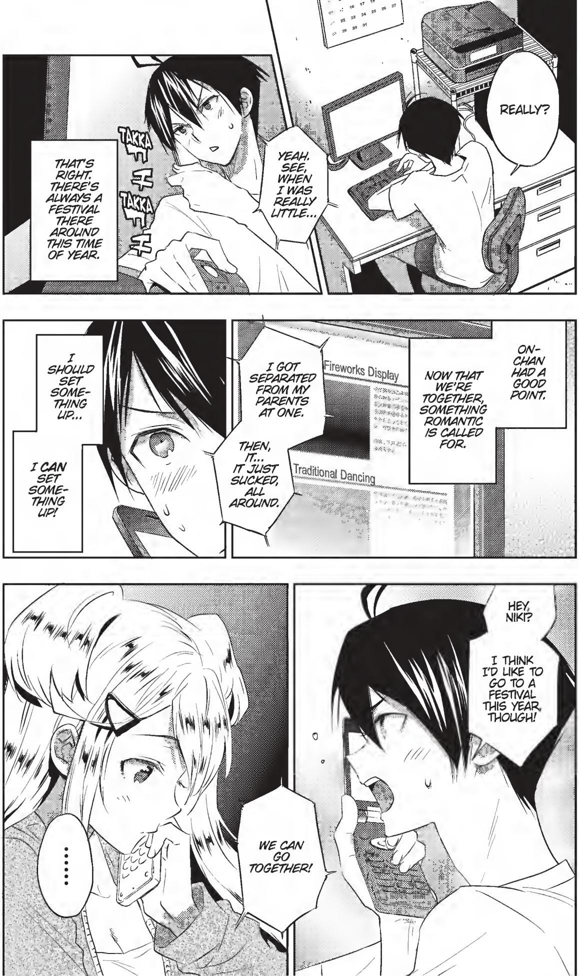

ALL RIIIIGHT...!
THERE, THAT'S IT. THAT'S THE "SQUEE AND GLEE" I MEANT...
CAPTAIN.
I AM SO HAPPY FOR YOU.
I HOPE YOUR RELATIONSHIP GOES WELL.
AS FOR ME, WELL...
I AM A MERE HUMAN. I CAN'T ERASE MY FEELINGS.
EVEN THOUGH I MAY ACT LIKE I CAN.
I'M NOT LIKE HIM.
I COULD *NEVER* BE LIKE HIM.

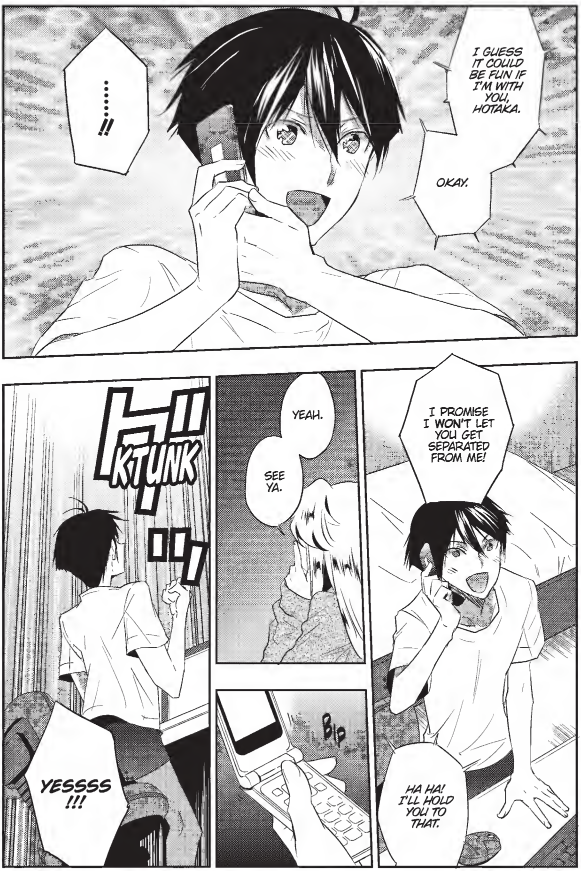

THERE!
21:00
WAIT. MAYBE I SHOULDN'T CALL RIGHT ON THE DOT? MAYBE IT MAKES ME LOOK TOO DESPERATE AND OVER-EAGER?
I SHOULD PROBABLY WAIT A MINUTE OR TWO...
THERE!
21:01
RIIING RIIING RIIING RIIING
KCHAK
UM, H-HELLO?!
AH! HOTAKA!
I WAS WAITING FOR YOU TO CALL.

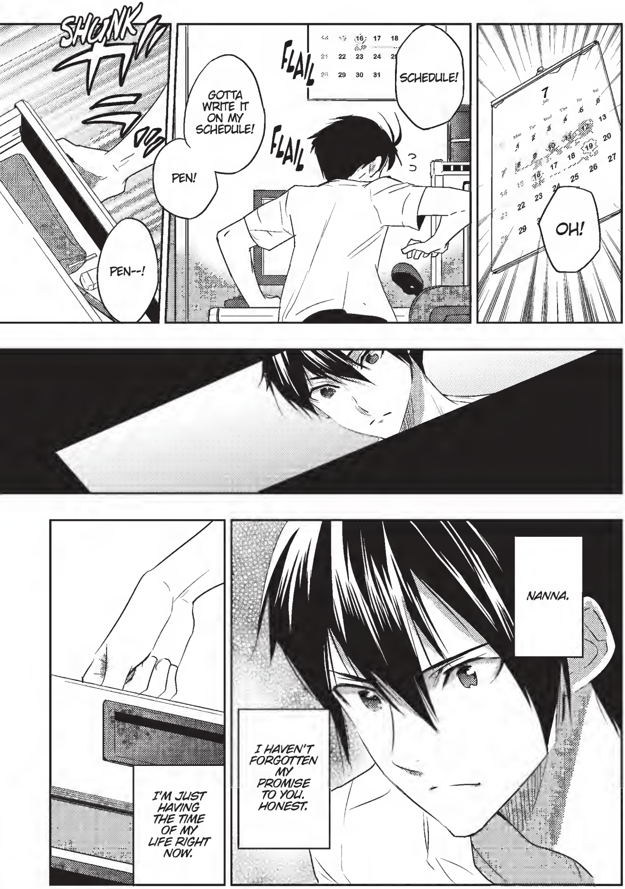

HM? ARE YOU OUTSIDE?
YEAH. I RAN OUT OF SHAMPOO.
SO I HAD TO MAKE AN EMERGENCY RUN TO THE MINI MART.
BUT I KNEW YOU'D BE CALLING...
SO I'VE BEEN HANGING OUT IN THE PARKING LOT, WAITING.
REALLY? ARE YOU SURE THAT'S SAFE?
THERE AREN'T ANY, Y'KNOW, DELINQUENTS LOITERING AROUND, ARE THERE?
NO, NOT REALLY.
HECK, THEY PROBABLY THINK *I'M* THE DELINQUENT, HANGING AROUND DOING NOTHING.
WHAT, REALLY?
NO WAY!
AHA HA HA!

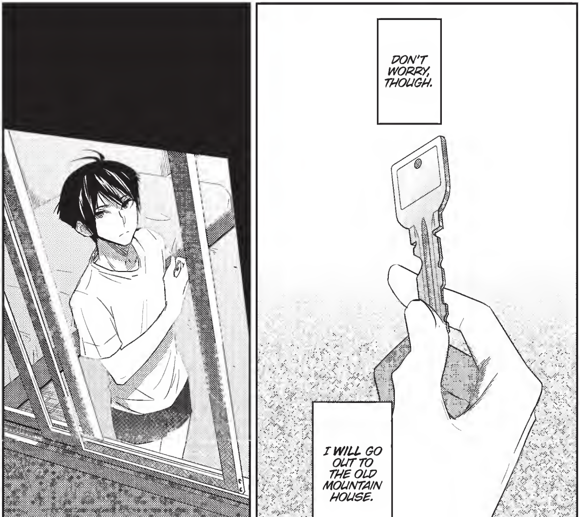

TOTALLY! I SO DO THAT, TOO!
AND THEN--
......
HM? SOMETHING WRONG?
NAH.
I JUST NOTICED THIS POSTER.
FESTIVAL
■■th Annual Park Summer Festival
第◆回 ■▩公園夏まつり
Fireworks Display
Karaoke Contest
Traditional Dancing
7/27 (Sat.) & 7/28 (Sun)
A POSTER?
YEAH. IT'S FOR A SUMMER FESTIVAL.
LOOKS LIKE THEY'RE HAVING ONE AGAIN THIS YEAR.
REALLY?!
A SUMMER FESTIVAL?! WHERE?!
第◆回 ■□公

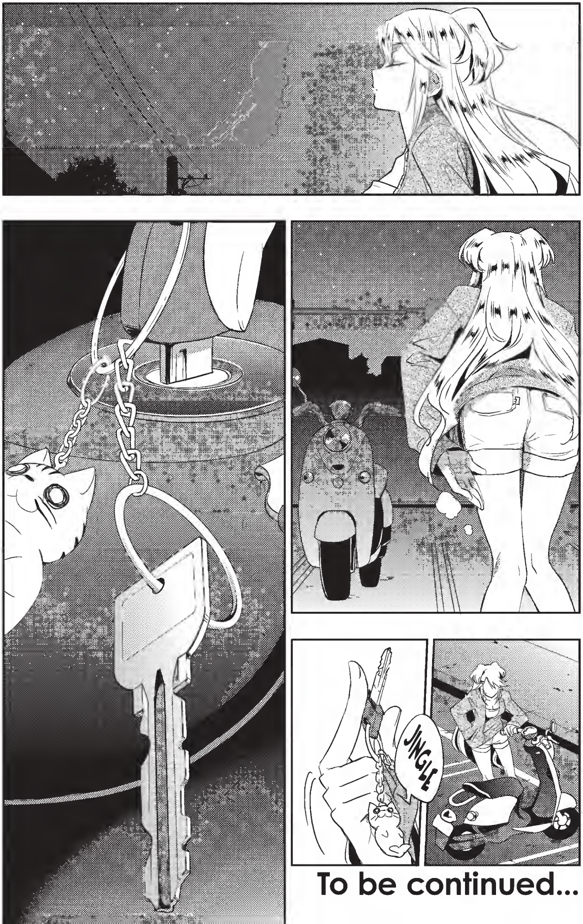

YOU KNOW THAT REALLY BIG PARK OVER BY THE STATION?
Premium GOLDFISH
YEAH, THAT ONE. IT SAYS IT'S GOING TO BE HUGE.
THEY'LL BRING OUT AN "OMIKOSHI" PORTABLE SHRINE AND EVERYTHING.
HM? I SOUND KINDA GLOOMY?
YEAH...
I GUESS YOU COULD SAY THAT.
SEE, *UM*...
I DON'T HAVE TOO MANY HAPPY MEMORIES WHEN IT COMES TO FESTIVALS.


REALLY?
YEAH. SEE, WHEN I WAS REALLY LITTLE...
TAKKA TAKKA
THAT'S RIGHT. THERE'S ALWAYS A FESTIVAL THERE AROUND THIS TIME OF YEAR.
ON-CHAN HAD A GOOD POINT.
NOW THAT WE'RE TOGETHER, SOMETHING ROMANTIC IS CALLED FOR.
Fireworks Display
Traditional Dancing
I GOT SEPARATED FROM MY PARENTS AT ONE.
THEN, IT... IT JUST SUCKED, ALL AROUND.
I SHOULD SET SOMETHING UP...
I CAN SET SOMETHING UP!
HEY, NIKI?
I THINK I'D LIKE TO GO TO A FESTIVAL THIS YEAR THOUGH!
WE CAN GO TOGETHER!
......


I GUESS IT COULD BE FUN IF I'M WITH YOU, HOTAKA.
OKAY.
......!!
I PROMISE I WON'T LET YOU GET SEPARATED FROM ME!
HA HA! I'LL HOLD YOU TO THAT.
YEAH.
SEE YA.
Blp
KTUNK
YESSSS!!!

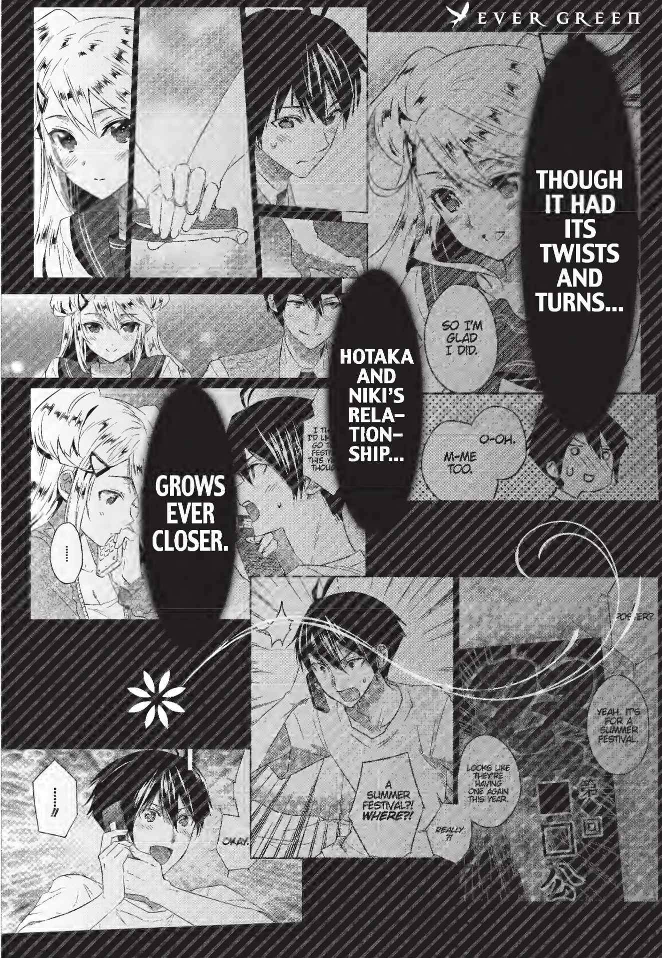

OH!
SCHEDULE!
GOTTA WRITE IT ON MY SCHEDULE!
FLAIL
FLAIL
PEN!
SHUNK
PEN--!
NANNA.
I HAVEN'T FORGOTTEN MY PROMISE TO YOU. HONEST.
I'M JUST HAVING THE TIME OF MY LIFE RIGHT NOW.


DON'T WORRY, THOUGH.
I **WILL** GO OUT TO THE OLD MOUNTAIN HOUSE.



To be continued...

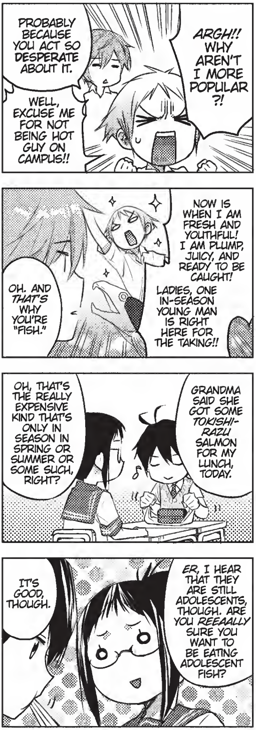
EVER GREEN


THOUGH IT HAD ITS TWISTS AND TURNS...
SO I'M GLAD I DID.
HOTAKA AND NIKI'S RELATIONSHIP...
O-OH.
M-ME TOO.
GROWS EVER CLOSER.
......
POSTER?
YEAH. IT'S FOR A SUMMER FESTIVAL.
LOOKS LIKE THEY'RE HAVING ONE AGAIN THIS YEAR.
REALLY?!
A SUMMER FESTIVAL?! *WHERE?!*
OKAY.
......!!

WHAT AWAITS THE NEW COUPLE AT THEIR VERY FIRST FESTIVAL DATE?
エバーグリーン[4]
EVER GREEN
COMING SOON!

evergreen
エバーグリーン

Extra-Large! Seal-cat Plushie & Miku the HUNTER
KYUUU!


ARGH!! WHY AREN'T I MORE POPULAR?!
PROBABLY BECAUSE YOU ACT SO DESPERATE ABOUT IT.
WELL, EXCUSE ME FOR NOT BEING HOT GUY ON CAMPUS!!
NOW IS WHEN I AM FRESH AND YOUTHFUL! I AM PLUMP, JUICY, AND READY TO BE CAUGHT!
LADIES, ONE IN-SEASON YOUNG MAN IS RIGHT HERE FOR THE TAKING!!
OH. AND *THAT'S* WHY YOU'RE "FISH."
GRANDMA SAID SHE GOT SOME *TOKISHI-RAZU* SALMON FOR MY LUNCH, TODAY.
OH, THAT'S THE REALLY EXPENSIVE KIND THAT'S ONLY IN SEASON IN SPRING OR SUMMER OR SOME SUCH, RIGHT?
ER, I HEAR THAT THEY ARE STILL ADOLESCENTS, THOUGH. ARE YOU *REEAALLY* SURE YOU WANT TO BE EATING ADOLESCENT FISH?
IT'S GOOD, THOUGH.

☆ SPECIAL THANKS ☆

Yuyuko Takemiya-sensei
Supervising Editor Takajima-sama
Keiko Seki-sama
The Editors of Dengeki Daioh

☆

Shin-sama, mockoss-sama
Soft Haikuo-sama
(Keikei-sama, Kokki Kawai-sama,
Aotonbo-sama)
Friends & Family
& our wonderful readers!

SEVEN SEAS ENTERTAINMENT PRESENTS

evergreen

VOLUME 3

story by **YUYUKO TAKEMIYA** / art by **AKIRA CASKABE**

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EVERGREEN VOL. 3
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Edited by ASCII MEDIA WORKS.
First published in Japan in 2014 by KADOKAWA CORPORATION, Tokyo.
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ISBN: 978-1-626922-12-9

Printed in Canada

First Printing: November 2015

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

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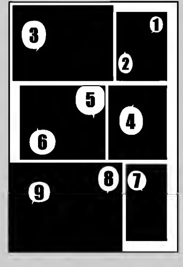
READING DIRECTIONS

This book reads from ***right to left***, Japanese style. If this is your first time reading manga, you start reading from the top right panel on each page and take it from there. If you get lost, just follow the numbered diagram here. It may seem backwards at first, but you'll get the hang of it! Have fun!!



HOT AND COLD. SUN AND RAIN.

Hotaka is at his wits' end. Suddenly, improbably, he is befriended by Awaya Niki—the smoking hot queen of the swim team. But just as abruptly, she decides to drop out of his life without a warning. Though confounded and frustrated at first, Hotaka has resolved, by hook or by crook, to get an explanation on why Niki is avoiding him. But how is he to do that when she doesn't answer his texts or his invitations to meet up and talk?

Rated: TEEN

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